CALIFORNIA THEOLOGICAL BAPTIST SEMINARY
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THE

LIVES

OF

JOHN WICLIFF;

AND OF THE MOST EMINENT OF HIS

DISCIPLES;

LORD COBHAM,

JOHN HUSS,

JEROME of PRAGUE,

AND

ZISCA.

After the way, which they call Hereſy, ſo worſhip *we* the God of *our* Fathers.

ACTS xxiv. 14.

By WILLIAM GILPIN, M. A.

The SECOND EDITION, corrected and improved.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBSON, Bookſeller to her Royal Highneſs the Princeſs Dowager of Wales, in *New-Bond-Street.*

M.DCC.LXVI.

TO

The Right Reverend

THOMAS,

Lord Biſhop of BRISTOL.

My LORD,

I HAVE taken the liberty to preſent the following work to your Lordſhip; the fruit of the little leiſure of many years. It may put in a diſtant claim to your protection, as a kind of appendix to ſome of your Lordſhip's valuable *Diſſertations on the Prophecies*. The *man of ſin* was never more apparent than at the time, when theſe Reformers lived; who began to ſtrip him of his diſguiſes; and gave the firſt and faireſt illuſtration of that prophecy, which your Lordſhip has ſo ably explained.

In whatever light this work may be conſidered by the public, your Lordſhip, with your uſual candour, will accept it as an acknowledgment of the reſpect, with which

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Obliged, and moſt obedient,

Humble ſervant,

WILLIAM GILPIN.

Cheam, Feb. 20, 1765.

THE

Houſe of SUPERSTITION.

A VISION.

By *Thomas Denton*, M. A. Rector of *Aſhted*, in *SURREY*.

I.

WHEN Sleep's all ſoothing hand with fetters ſoft
Ties down each ſenſe and lulls to balmy reſt;
The internal pow'r, creative fancy, oft
Broods o'er her treaſures in the formful breaſt.
Thus when no longer daily cares engage,
The buſy mind purſues the darling theme;
Hence Angels whiſper'd to the ſlumb'ring ſage,
And god's of old inſpir'd the heroe's dream;
Hence as I ſlept, theſe images aroſe.
To fancy's eye, and join'd this fairy ſcene compoſe.

II.

As, when fair morning dries her dewy tears,
The mountain lifts o'er miſts its lofty head;
Thus new to ſight a Gothic dome appears,
With the grey ruſt of rolling years o'erſpread.
On ſolid baſe of ever-during ſtone,
Which erſt was laid by workmanſhip divine,

Diſtorted fancy's way-ward freaks are ſhewn,
To hide with airs groteſque the grand deſign:
With fragil ſtraw and reeds the front is lin'd;
Vain prop of tott'ring age, the ſport of every wind.

III.

In flocks unnumbered, like a pitchy cloud,
Birds of ill omen round the fabric fly,
Here build their neſts, and nurſe their callow brood,
And ſcare the timorous ſoul with boading cry.
Here SUPERSTITION holds her dreary reign,
And her lip-labour'd oriſons ſhe plies
In Tongue unknown, when morn bedews the plain,
Or evening ſkirts with gold the weſtern ſkies;
To the dumb ſtock ſhe bends, or ſculptur'd wall,
And many a croſs ſhe makes, and many a bead lets fall.

IV.

Near to the dome a magic pair reſide
Prompt to deceive, and practic'd to confound;
Here hood-wint *Ignorance* is ſeen to bide,
Stretching in darkſome cave along the ground;
No object dawns upon his ſtupid eyes,
Nor voice articulate arreſts his ears,
Save when beneath the moon pale ſpectres riſe,
And haunt his ſoul with viſionary fears;
Or when hoarſe winds incavern'd murmur round,
And babbling echo wakes, and iterates the ſound.

V.

Where boughs entwining form an artful ſhade,
And in faint glimmerings juſt admit the light,
There *Errour* ſits in borrow'd white array'd,
And in *Truth*'s form deceives the tranſient ſight.

Her

Her beaming luſtre when fair *Truth* imparts,
A thouſand glories wait her opening day;
Thus *Errour* fain would cheat with mimic arts
Th' unpractic'd mind and pours a ſpurious ray;
She cleaves with magic wand the liquid ſkies,
Bids airy forms appear, and ſcenes fantaſtic riſe.

VI.

A porter deaf, decrepid, old and blind
Sits at the gate, and lifts a liberal bowl
With wine of wondrous power to lull the mind,
And check each vig'rous effort of the ſoul:
Whoe'er unwares ſhall ply his thirſty lip,
And drink in gulps the luſcious liquor down,
Shall hapleſs from the cup deluſion ſip,
And objects ſee in features not their own;
Each way-worn traveller that hither came,
He lav'd with copious draughts, and *Prejudice* his name.

VII.

Within a various race are ſeen to wonne,
Props of her age, and pillars of her ſtate,
Which erſt were nurtur'd by the * wither'd crone,
And born to *Tyranny*, her grieſly mate:
The firſt appear'd in pomp of purple pride,
With triple crown erect, and throned high;
Two golden keys hang dangling by his ſide
To lock or ope the portals of the ſky;
Crouching and proſtrate there (ah ſight unmeet!)
The crowned head would bow, and lick his duſty feet.

VIII.

With bended arm he on a book reclin'd
Faſt lock'd with iron claſps from vulgar eyes;

* Superſtition.

Heav'n's gracious gift to light the wand'ring mind,
To lift fall'n man, and guide him to the skies!
A man no more, a GOD he would be thought,
And 'mazed mortals blindly muſt obey:
With ſleight of hand he lying wonders wrought,
And near him loathſom heaps of reliques lay:
Strange legends would he read, and figments dire
Of Limbus' priſon'd ſhades, and purgatory fire.

IX.

There meagre *Pennance* ſat, in ſackcloth clad,
And to his breaſt cloſe hugg'd the viper, ſin;
Yet oft with brandiſh'd whip would gaul, as mad,
With voluntary ſtripes his ſhrivel'd skin.
Counting large heaps of o'erbounding good
Of ſaints that dy'd within the church's pale,
With gentler aſpect there *Indulgence* ſtood,
And to the needy culprit would retail;
There too, ſtrange merchandize! he pardons ſold,
And treaſons would abſolve, and murders purge with gold.

X.

With ſhaven crown in a ſequeſter'd cell,
In dortour ſad a lazy lubbard lay;
No work had he, ſave ſome few beads to tell,
And indolently ſnore the hours away.
No patriot voice awakes his languid eye;
No calls of honour raiſe his drowſy head,
Impure he deems chaſte Hymen's holy tie;
To all life's elegant endearments dead:
No ſocial hopes hath he, no ſocial fears,
But ſpends in lethargy devout the ling'ring years.

XI.

Gnaſhing his teeth in mood of furious ire
Fierce *Perſecution* ſits, and with ſtrong breath

Wakes

Wakes into living flame huge heaps of fire,
And feaſts on murders, maſſacres and death.
Near him is plac'd *Procruſtes'* iron bed
To ſtretch or mangle to a certain ſize;
To ſee the victims pangs each heart muſt bleed,
To hear their doleful ſhrieks and piercing cries;
Yet he beholds them with unmoiſtned eye,
Their writhing pains his ſport, their moans his melody.

XII.

A gradual light diffuſing o'er the gloom,
And ſlow approaching with majeſtic pace,
A lovely maid appears in beauty's bloom,
With native charms and unaffected grace:
Her hand a clear reflecting mirrour ſhows,
In which all objects their true features wear,
And on her cheek a bluſh indignant glows
To ſee the horrid ſorc'ries practis'd there;
She ſnatch'd the volume from the tyrant's rage
Unlock'd it's iron claſps, and ope'd the heavenly page.

XIII.

Marching in goodly row, with ſteady feet,
Some reverend worthies followed in her train,
With love of truth whoſe kindred boſoms beat,
To free the fettered mind from errors chain.
Wicliff the firſt appeared and led the croud,
And in his hand a lighted torch he bore,
To drive the gloom of ſuperſtition's cloud
And all corruption's mazes to explore.
Next noble *Cobham*, on whoſe honoured brow
The martyr's crown is placed, wreath'd with the laurel bough.

XIV.

Huſs mild and firm next dares the tyrant's fires;
And ſweet-tongu'd *Jerome*, skilful to perſuade:

And

And *Ziſca*, whom fair liberty inſpires,
Blind chieftain! waves around his burniſh'd blade.
Unwearied paſtor, with unbating zeal,
Next * *Gilpin* comes, on ſhepherd's ſtaff reclin'd:
He of his much-loved flock each want can feel,
And feeds the hungry mouth, and famiſh'd mind:
Worſter's good † prelate laſt, with artleſs ſmile,
Surveys each magic fraud, and eyes the flaming pile.

XV.

" My name is TRUTH, and you, each holy ſeer,
" Who thus my ſteps with ardent gaze purſue,
" Unveil, ſhe ſaid, the ſacred myſteries here,
" Give the celeſtial boon to public view.
" Tho' blatant *Obloquy* with leprous jaws
" Shall blot your fame, and blaſt the generous deed,
" Yet in revolving years your liberal cauſe
" Shall meet in glory's court its ample meed,
" Your names, illuſtrious in the faithful page,
" With each hiſtoric grace ſhall ſhine thro' ev'ry age.

XVI.

" What tho' the tyrant's fierce relentleſs Pow'r
" Exerts in torment all its horrid ſkill;
" Tho' premature you meet the fatal hour
" Scorching in flames, or writhing on the wheel;
" Yet when the § dragon in the deep Abyſs
" Shall lye, faſt bound in adamantine chain,
" Ye with the lamb ſhall riſe to ceaſeleſs bliſs,
" Firſt-fruits of death, and partners of his reign;
" Then ſhall the great ſabbatic reſt repay
" The noble ſtrife ſuſtained, the ſufferings of a day."

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* BERNARD GILPIN. † Bp. LATIMER.

§ See Revel. Chap. 20. and the learned and ingenious Biſhop of BRISTOL's Comment upon it, in the 3d Vol. of his Diſſertation on the Prophecies.

THE

LIFE

OF

JOHN WICLIFF.

ABOUT the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the uſurpations of the church of Rome had ariſen to their greateſt height. That amazing ſyſtem of ſpiritual tyranny had drawn within its influence, in a manner, the whole government of England. The haughty legate, ſtriding over law, made even the miniſters of juſtice tremble at his tribunal: parliaments were over-awed; and ſovereigns obliged to temporize: while the lawleſs eccleſiaſtic, intrenched behind the authority of councils and decrees, ſet at naught the civil power; and opened an aſylum to any, the moſt profligate, diſturbers of ſociety.

In the mean time the taxes gathered, under various pretences, by the agents of the conclave, exceeded, by above two thirds, the produce of the royal treaſury: and when men conſidered how one claim after another had ariſen, and from ſlender pretences had taken the forms of legal eſtabliſhments, they could not but be alarmed at an evil teeming with ſuch ruin; and ſaw deluſion even through the gloom of ignorance. The people, in ſpite of ſuperſtition, cried out againſt ſuch ſcandalous exactions; and the legiſlature began to think ſeriouſly of checking theſe enormities by reſolute laws.

The rapacity of the court of Rome firſt ſet the ſuſpicions of men afloat. The votaries of the church bore with temper to ſee the extenſion of its power; and its advocates had always to obtrude upon the people the divine ſanctions of its dominion; and could on that topic deſcant plauſibly enough. But when this holy church, the ſacred object of veneration, became immerſed in temporal things; when it plainly appeared to be fully inſtructed in all the arts of graſping and ſquandering, which were found among mere human beings, its mercenary views

views were evident; and ſerious men were led to queſtion opinions, which came accompanied by ſuch unwarrantable practice.

The firſt perſon of any eminence, who eſpouſed the cauſe of religious liberty, was John Wicliff. This reformer was born about the year 1324, in the reign of Edward II. Of his extraction we have no certain account. His parents deſigning him for the church, ſent him to Queens-college in Oxford, then juſt founded by Robert Eaglesfield, confeſſor to queen Philippa. But not meeting with the advantages for ſtudy in that new-eſtabliſhed houſe, which he expected, he removed to Merton-college; which was then eſteemed one of the moſt learned ſocieties in Europe.

Here he applied with ſuch induſtry, that he is ſaid to have gotten by heart the moſt abſtruſe parts of the works of Ariſtotle. The logic of that acute philoſopher ſeems chiefly to have engaged his attention; in which he was ſo converſant, that he became a moſt ſubtile diſputant, and reigned in the ſchools without a rival.

Thus prepared, he began next with divinity. The divinity of thoſe times correſponded with the logic. What was fartheſt from common ſenſe had moſt the air of learning, and appeared moſt worth a ſcholar's purſuit. In that age flouriſhed thoſe eminent doctors, who mutually complimenting each other with ſounding titles, the profound, the angelic, and the ſeraphic, drew upon themſelves the reverence of their own times, and the contempt of all poſterity. Wicliff's attention was a while engaged in this faſhionable ſtudy; in which he became ſo thorough a proficient, that he was maſter of all the niceties of that ſtrange jargon, which is commonly called ſchool-divinity.

His good ſenſe, however ſeems to have freed him early from the ſhackles of authority and faſhion. He ſaw the folly of that ſpecies of learning, which had taken his attention; and having been miſled rather than bewildered, he diſengaged himſelf without much difficulty.

From this time he ſeems to have chalked out for himſelf a ſimpler path. He took the naked text of ſcripture into his hands, and became his own annotator. The writings

tings of the ſchoolmen, he ſoon found, were calculated only to make ſectaries; the bible alone to make a rational chriſtian. Hence he attained that noble freedom of thought, which was afterwards ſo conſpicuous in all his writings; and among his contemporaries was rewarded, after the faſhion of the times, with the title of the evangelic doctor.

To theſe ſtudies he added that of the civil and canon law; and is ſaid alſo to have been well verſed in the municipal laws of his country.

In the mean time his reputation increaſed with his knowledge: and he was reſpected not only as an able ſcholar, but eſteemed as a ſerious and pious man; a ſincere enquirer after truth; and a ſteady maintainer of it when diſcovered.

The firſt thing, which drew upon him the public eye, was his defence of the univerſity againſt the begging friars. The affair was this.

Theſe religious, from the time of their firſt ſettlement in Oxford, which was in the year 1230, had been very troubleſome neighbours to the univerſity. They ſet up a different intereſt, aimed at a diſtinct

juriſdiction, fomented feuds between the ſcholars and their ſuperiors, and in many reſpects became ſuch offenſive inmates, that the univerſity was obliged to curb their licentiouſneſs by ſevere ſtatutes. This inſolent behaviour on one ſide, and the oppoſition it met with on the other, laid the foundation of an endleſs quarrel. The friars appealed to the pope; the ſcholars to the civil power: and ſometimes one party, and ſometimes the other prevailed. Thus the cauſe became general; and an oppoſition to the friars was looked upon as the teſt of a young fellow's affection to the univerſity.

It happened, while things were in this ſituation, that the friars had gotten among them a notion, of which they were exceedingly fond; that Chriſt was a common beggar; that his diſciples were beggars alſo; and that begging, by their example, was of goſpel-inſtitution. This notion they propagated with great zeal from all the pulpits, both in Oxford, and the neighbourhood, to which they had acceſs.

Wicliff, who had long held theſe religious in great contempt for the lazineſs of their lives, thought he had now found a fair

fair occaſion to expoſe them. He drew up therefore, and preſently publiſhed, a treatiſe *Againſt able beggary*; in which he firſt ſhewed the difference between the poverty of Chriſt and that of the friars, and the obligations which all chriſtians lay under to labour in ſome way for the good of ſociety. He then laſhed the friars with great acrimony, proving them to be an infamous and uſeleſs ſet of men, wallowing in luxury; and ſo far from being objects of charity, that they were a reproach not only to religion, but even to human ſociety. This piece was calculated for the many, on whom it made a great impreſſion. At the ſame time it increaſed his reputation with the learned; all men of ſenſe and freedom admiring the work, and applauding the ſpirit of the author.

From this time the univerſity began to conſider him as one of her firſt champions; and in conſequence of the reputation he had gained, he was ſoon afterwards promoted to the maſterſhip of Baliol-college.

About this time, archbiſhop Iſlip, founded Canterbury-hall in Oxford, where he eſtabliſhed a warden, and eleven ſcholars. The

warden's name was Wodehall; who with three of his ſcholars were monks; the reſt were ſecular. The prudent archbiſhop, unwilling to irritate either ſide, choſe in this way to divide his favours. Wodehall, though brought from a diſtant monaſtery, ruſhed immediately into the quarrel, which he found ſubſiſting at Oxford; and having vexed the unhappy ſeculars incorporated with him, by every method in his power, he became next a public diſturber; and made it his particular employment to raiſe and foment animoſities in colleges, and diſputes in the convocation. The archbiſhop, hearing of his behaviour, and finding the report well-grounded, apologized to the univerſity for placing among them ſo troubleſome a man; and immediately ejected both him, and the three regulars, his aſſociates. The primate's next care was to appoint a proper ſucceſſor; and with this view applied to Wicliff, whom he was greatly deſirous of placing at the head of his new foundation. Wicliff, whether through an inclination to cultivate the archbiſhop's acquaintance, or to put in order a new-eſtabliſhed houſe, accepted the propoſal, and was immediately

mediately choſen warden of Canterbury-hall.

But his new dignities ſoon involved him in difficulties. He was ſcarce eſtabliſhed in it, when the archbiſhop died, and was ſucceeded by Simon Langham, biſhop of Ely. This prelate had ſpent his life in a cloyſter, having been firſt a monk, and afterwards an abbot. The ejected regulars failed not to take advantage of ſo favourable an opportunity; and made inſtant application to the new archbiſhop, expecting every thing from a man whom they naturally imagined well inclined to their order. Their expectations were juſtly founded. Langham eſpouſed their cauſe with great readineſs; ejected Wicliff, and the regulars his companions; and ſequeſtered their revenues.

So flagrant a piece of injuſtice, raiſed a general out-cry. "If the very act of a founder might be thus ſet aſide by a private perſon, how precarious was college-preferment!" In ſhort, Wicliff was adviſed by his friends to appeal to the pope; who durſt not, they told him, countenance ſo injurious a proceeding. Urban foreſeeing ſome difficulty in the affair, prudently ſtep-

ed

ed behind the curtain, and commiſſioned a cardinal to examine it. The archbiſhop being cited put in his plea; and each ſide accuſed and anſwered by turns, protracting the buſineſs into great length.

While this matter was in agitation, an affair happened, which brought it to a ſpeedy concluſion. Edward the III. who was now king of England, had for ſome time withdrawn the tribute, which his predeceſſors, from the time of king John, had paid to the pope. The pope menaced in his uſual language: but he had a prince to deal with of too high a ſpirit to be ſo intimidated. Edward called a parliament, laid the affair before them, and deſired their advice. The parliament without much debating reſolved, that king John had done an illegal thing, and had given up the rights of the nation. At the ſame time they adviſed the king by no means to ſubmit to the pope; and promiſed to aſſiſt him to the utmoſt of their power, if the affair ſhould bring on conſequences.

While the parliament was thus calling in queſtion the pope's authority, the clergy, eſpecially the regulars, ſhewed their zeal by

ſpeaking

ſpeaking and writing in his defence. His undoubted right to his revenue was their ſubject; which they proved by a variety of arguments, drawn from the divinity, and adapted to the genius of thoſe times.

Among others who liſted themſelves in this cauſe, a monk, of more learning, and of a more liberal turn of thought than common, publiſhed a treatiſe, written in a very ſpirited and plauſible manner. His arguments met with many advocates, and helped to keep the minds of the people in ſuſpence. Wicliff, whoſe indignation was raiſed at ſeeing ſo bad a cauſe ſo well defended, undertook to oppoſe the monk, and did it in ſo maſterly a way, that he was no longer conſidered as unanſwerable.

Soon after Wicliff had publiſhed this book, the ſuit at Rome was determined againſt him: and when men ſaw an effect correſponding ſo exactly with a probable cauſe, they could not avoid aſſigning that probable cauſe, as a real one. In a word, nobody doubted but his oppoſition to the pope, at ſo critical a time, was the true cauſe of his being non-ſuited at Rome.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding his diſappointment, Wicliff ſtill continued at Oxford; where his friends, about this time, procured him a benefice. Soon after, the divinity profeſſor's chair, falling vacant, he took a doctor's degree, and was elected into it; the univerſity paying him this compliment, not only as the reward of his merit, but as a compenſation for his loſs.

Wicliff had now attained the ſummit of his hopes. His ſtation afforded him that opportunity, which he wanted, of throwing ſome new lights, as he imagined, upon religious ſubjects. A long courſe of reaſoning had now fully convinced him, that the Romiſh religion was a ſyſtem of errors. The ſcandalous lives of the monaſtic clergy led him firſt into this train of thinking; and an inquiry into antiquity had confirmed him in it. But it was a bold undertaking to encounter errors of ſo long a ſtanding; errors, which had taken ſo deep a root, and had ſpread themſelves ſo wide. The undertaking at leaſt required the greateſt caution. He reſolved therefore at firſt to go on with the popular argument, which he had begun

begun, and continue his attack upon the monaſtic clergy.

It was a circumſtance in his favour, that the begging friars were at this time in the higheſt diſcredit at Oxford. The occaſional oppoſition he had already given them, had by no means hurt his reputation; and as he really thought the monaſtic clergy, the principal inſtruments of the prevailing corruption, he was fully determined not to ſpare them. In his public lectures therefore he repreſented them as a ſet of men, who profeſſed indeed to live under the rule of holy ſaints, but had now ſo far degenerated from their firſt inſtitution, that they were become a ſcandal to their founders. Men might well cry out, he ſaid, againſt the decay of religion; but he could ſhew them from whence this decay proceeded. While the preachers of religion never inculcated religious duties, but entertained the people with idle ſtories, and lying miracles; while they never inforced the neceſſity of a good life, but taught their hearers to put their truſt in a bit of ſealed parchment, and the prayers of hypocrites, it was impoſſible, he ſaid, but religion muſt decay. Such treacherous friends

friends did more hurt than open enemies.—But a regard for religion, he added, was not to be expected from them: they had nothing in view but the advancement of their order. In every age they had made it their practice to invent, and multiply such new opinions and doctrines as suited their avaritious views: nay they had, in a manner, set aside christianity, by binding men with their traditions in preference to the rule of Christ, who, it might well be supposed, left nothing useful out of his scheme.

In such language did Wicliff inveigh against the monastic clergy; and opened the eyes of men to a variety of abuses, which were before hidden in the darkness of superstition.

He had not, however, yet avowedly questioned any doctrine of the church. All he had hitherto attempted was to loosen the prejudices of the vulgar. His success in this warranted a further progress; and he began next to think of attacking some of the fundamentals of popery.

In this design he still proceeded with his usual caution. At first he thought it sufficient to lead his adversaries into logical and metaphysical

metaphyſical diſputations; accuſtoming them to hear novelties, and to bear contradiction. Nothing paſſed in the ſchools but learned arguments on the form of things, on the increaſe of time, on ſpace, ſubſtance, and identity. In theſe diſputations he artfully intermixed, and puſhed as far as he durſt, new opinions in divinity; ſounding, as it were, the minds of his hearers. At length, finding he had a great party in the ſchools, and that he was liſtened to with attention, he ventured to be more explicit, and by degrees opened himſelf at large.

He began by invalidating all the writings of the fathers after the tenth century. At that time he ſaid an age of darkneſs and error commenced; and the honeſt enquirer after truth could never ſatisfy himſelf among the opinions and doctrines, which then took their birth.

The ſpeculative corruptions, which had crept into religion were the firſt ſubject of his enquiry. Many of theſe he traced out, from their earlieſt origin; and with great accuracy and acuteneſs ſhewed the progreſs they had made, as they deſcended through the ages of ſuperſtition. He attacked next the

the uſurpations of the court of Rome. On this ſubject he was very copious: it was his favourite topic; and ſeldom failed, however cooly he might begin, to give him warmth and ſpirit as he proceeded. On theſe, and many other ſubjects of the ſame kind, he inſiſted with great freedom, and a ſtrength of reaſoning far ſuperior to the learning of thoſe times.

This ſpirited attack upon the church of Rome hath been attributed by his enemies to motives of reſentment. His deprivation, it is ſaid, was the unlucky cauſe of all this heat and bitterneſs. And indeed his conduct, in this inſtance, hath unqueſtionably the appearance of being influenced by his paſſions.—But the candid of all parties will be very cautious in *aſſigning motives*; and the friends of Wicliff may with truth remonſtrate, that he began his attack upon the church of Rome, before he had been injured by the pope. They may add to, that he never before had ſo proper an occaſion to queſtion publickly the erroneous tenets of religion.

From whatever motives however this ſpirited attack proceeded, we are not ſurpriſed

priſed to find a violent clamour raiſed againſt him by the romiſh clergy. The archbiſhop of Canterbury, taking the lead, reſolved to proſecute him with the utmoſt vigour. But hereſy was a new crime. The church had ſlept in its errors through ſo many ages, that it was unprepared for an attack. Records however were ſearched, and precedents examined; till, with ſome difficulty, at length Wicliff was deprived and ſilenced.

Edward the Third after a glorious and active reign, was, at this time, too much impaired both in body and mind, to bear the fatigues of government. The whole adminiſtration of affairs was in the hands of his ſon the duke of Lancaſter, commonly known by the name of John of Ghent.

This prince had a ſpirit anſwerable to his birth, and preſerved the forms of royalty as much as any monarch of his time. He had violent paſſions, of which his enemies and friends were equally ſenſible. In religion he had free notions; and whether his creed gave offence to the popiſh clergy; or whether he had made ſome efforts to curb

the exorbitance of their power, it is certain they were vehemently incenſed againſt him; and ſome of * the leading churchmen, it is ſaid, had uſed very baſe arts to blacken his character. With equal fire the duke retorted their ill-treatment; and having long deſpiſed them, and being now ſo exceedingly provoked, he conceived a ſettled prejudice againſt the whole order; and endeavoured by all the means in his power to bring them into the ſame contempt with others, in which he held them himſelf.

This quarrel between the Duke of Lancaſter and the clergy, was the occaſion of introducing Wicliff into public life; and this introduction afforded him afterwards an opportunity of ſignalizing himſelf ſtill more in the great cauſe of religious liberty. The duke, it ſeems, had heard with pleaſure, of the attack he had made upon the church of Rome; and had waited the conſequences of it with great attention; and when he now found,

* This is particularly charged upon William of Wickham, Biſhop of Winchester; but a late very accurate and ingenious writer hath ſufficiently exculpated him on this head.

found, that Wicliff was likely to be the ſufferer, he interpoſed, reſcued him out of the hands of his enemies, who were perſuing their advantage, and brought him to court; where, through a paſſionate vibration of temper he took him haſtily into confidence, and treated him with a kindneſs proportioned to the enmity which he bore the clergy.

The oppreſſions of the Court of Rome were, at this time, ſeverely felt in England. Many things were complained of; but nothing more than the ſtate of church-preferments; almoſt all of which, and even rectories, and vicarages of any value, in whomſoever originally veſted, were now through one fiction or another, claimed by the pope. With theſe he penſioned his friends and favourites; moſt of whom, being foreigners, reſided abroad; and left their benefices in the hands of ill-paid, and negligent curates. By theſe means religion decayed; the country was drained of money; and, what was looked upon as moſt vexatious, a body of inſolent tythe-gatherers were ſet over the people, who had their own fortunes to make out of the ſurplus of their exactions.

Theſe hardſhips, notwithſtanding the blind obedience paid at that time to the ſee of Rome, created great unquietneſs. The nation ſaw itſelf wronged; and parliamentary petitions, in very warm language, were preferred to the conclave: but to little purpoſe; the pope lending a very negligent ear to any motion which ſo nearly affected his revenue.

The duke of Lancaſter, however, at this time, though the nation had now complained in vain during more than 30 years, was determined, if poſſible to obtain redreſs. And, in the firſt place, to open the eyes of the people in the moſt effectual manner, he obliged the biſhops to ſend in liſts of the number and value of ſuch preferments, as were in the hands of foreigners. From theſe liſts it appeared what immenſe ſums, in that one way were conveyed every year out of the kingdom.

The next ſtep taken was to ſend an embaſſy to the pope to treat of the liberties of the church of England; at the head of which embaſſy were the Biſhop of Bangor, and Dr. Wicliff. They were met at Bruges, on the part of Rome, by the biſhops of Pampelone

and

and Semigaglia, and the provoſt of Valenza. Theſe agents, practiſed in the policy of their court, ſpun out the negotiation with great dexterity; ſome hiſtorians mention the continuance of it during two years. The romiſh ambaſſadors however, finding themſelves hard preſſed by their antagoniſts; and prudently conſidering, that it would be eaſier to evade a treaty when made, than in the preſent circumſtances not to make one, determined at laſt to bring matters to a concluſion. Accordingly it was agreed, that the pope ſhould no longer diſpoſe of any benefices belonging to the church of England. No mention was made of biſhopricks: this was thought a voluntary omiſſion in the biſhop of Bangor; and men the rather believed ſo, when they ſaw him twice afterwards tranſlated by the pope's authority.

But though Wicliff failed in his endeadeavours to ſerve his country by this treaty, (for indeed it was never obſerved) he made his journey however of ſome ſervice to himſelf. It was his great care to uſe the opportunity it afforded him of ſifting out the real deſigns of the court of Rome, not only in this affair, but in all its other negotiations:

he enquired into the ends it had in view, and the means it employed: and by frequent converſations with the ambaſſadors upon theſe ſubjects, he penetrated ſo far into the conſtitution and policy of that corrupt court, that he began to think of it in a much harſher manner than he had ever yet done, and to be more convinced of its avarice and ambition. Prejudiced as he had long been againſt its doctrines and miniſtry, he had never yet thought ſo ill of its deſigns.

Thus influenced, on his coming home, we find him inveighing in his lectures againſt the church of Rome, in warmer language than he had hitherto uſed. The exemption of the clergy from the juriſdiction of the civil power was one of his topics of invective: the uſe of ſanctuaries was another: indulgences a third: in ſhort there has ſcarce been a corrupt principle or practice in the Roman church, detected by latter ages, which his penetration had not at that early day diſcovered: and though his reaſonings want much of that acuteneſs and ſtrength, with which the beſt writers of theſe times have diſcuſſed thoſe ſubjects; yet when we conſider the uninlightened age in which he lived, we

we rather ſtand aſtoniſhed at that force of genius which carried him ſo far, than in any degree wonder at his not going farther.

The Pope himſelf was often the ſubject of his invective; his infallibility, his uſurpations, his pride, his avarice, and his tyranny, were his frequent theme; and indeed his language was never warmer than when on theſe topics. The celebrated epithet of *antichriſt*, which in after ages, was ſo liberally beſtowed upon the pope, ſeems to have been firſt given him by this reformer.

The pomp and luxury of biſhops he would frequently laſh; and would aſk the people, when they ſaw their prelates riding abroad accompanied with fourſcore horſemen in ſilver trappings, whether they perceived any reſemblance between ſuch ſplendor, and the ſimplicity of primitive biſhops?

Where theſe lectures were read, does not certainly appear. It is moſt probable, however, they were read in Oxford; where Wicliff ſeems by this time to have recovered his former ſtation, and where he had ſtill a conſiderable party in his favour.

In the mean time he was frequently at court, where he continued in great credit

with the duke of Lancaſter. Many indeed expected ſome high preferment in the church was intended for him; but we meet with no account of his having had the offer of any ſuch, whether he himſelf declined it, or the duke thought an eminent ſtation in the church would only the more expoſe him to the malice of his enemies. The duke however took care to make him independent by conferring a good benefice upon him, the rectory of Lutterworth in Leiceſterſhire; whither he immediately repaired, and ſet himſelf faithfuly to diſcharge the duties of it. We hear nothing more of his other benefice; ſo that it is probable he gave that up, when he accepted Lutterworth.

Wicliff was ſcarce ſettled in his pariſh, when his enemies taking the advantage of his retirement, began again to perſecute him with freſh vigour. At the head of this perſecution were Sudbury, archbiſhop of Canterbury, and Courtney, biſhop of London. The former was a man of uncommon moderation for the times in which he lived; the latter was an inflamed bigot. The archbiſhop indeed ſeems to have been preſſed into this ſervice; to which he afforded only the

the countenance of his name. Courtney, took upon himſelf the management of it; and having procured proper letters from Rome, Wicliff was cited to appear before him on a day fixed, at St. Paul's in London.

This was an unexpected ſummons to Wicliff; who imagined probably that the obſcurity of his retreat would have ſcreened him from his enemies. He repaired however immediately to the duke of Lancaſter, to conſult him on a buſineſs of ſuch importance. The duke did what he could to avert the proſecution; but finding himſelf unable to oppoſe a force compoſed of little leſs than the whole eccleſiaſtical order, he thought it more probable that he ſhould be able to protect his friend from the future conſequences of the clergy's malice, than to ſcreen him from the preſent effects of it. Determined however, to give him what countenance he could, he attended him in perſon to his trial; and engaged alſo the lord Piercy, earl-marſhal of England, to accompany them.

When they came to St. Paul's, they found the court ſitting, and a very great croud aſ-

ſembled;

ſembled; through which the earl-marſhal made uſe of his authority to gain an entrance.

The arrival of ſuch perſonages, with their attendants, occaſioned no little diſturbance in the church; and the biſhop of London, piqued to ſee Wicliff ſo attended, told the earl with a peeviſh air, that if he had known before what diſturbance he would have made, he ſhould have been ſtopped at the door. He was greatly offended alſo at the duke for inſiſting that Wicliff ſhould ſit during his trial; and let fall ſome expreſſions, which that haughty prince was ill able to bear. He immediately fired; and reproached the biſhop with great bitterneſs. Warm language enſued. The prelate however had the advantage; of which the duke ſeeming conſcious, from railing began to threaten; and looking diſdainfully at the biſhop, told him, that he would bring down the pride, not only of him, but of all the prelacy of England; and turning to a perſon near him, he ſaid in a half whiſper, that rather than take ſuch uſage from the biſhop, he would pull him by the hair of his head out of the church. Theſe words being caught up by ſome, who ſtood near, were ſpread among

among the croud, and in an inſtant threw the whole aſſembly into a ferment; voices from every part being heard, united in one general cry, that their biſhop ſhould not be ſo uſed, and that they would ſtand by him to their laſt breath. In ſhort, the confuſion aroſe to ſuch an height, that all buſineſs was at an end, the whole was diſorder, and the court broke up without having taken any ſtep of conſequence in the affair.

The tumult did not ſo end. The duke, agitated by his paſſions, went directly to the houſe of peers; where enveighing againſt the riotous diſpoſition of the Londoners, he preferred a bill, that very day, to deprive the city of London of its privileges, and to alter the juriſdiction of it.

The city of London was never more moved than on this occaſion. The heads of it met in conſultation; while the populace aſſembled in a riot, and aſſaulted the houſes of the duke, and the earl marſhal, who both left the city with precipitation.

Theſe tumults, which continued ſome time, put a ſtop to all proceedings againſt Wicliff; nor indeed do we find him in any farther

farther trouble, during the remainder of king Edward's reign.

In the year 1377 that prince died, and was ſucceeded by his grandſon Richard the Second. Richard being only eleven years of age, the firſt buſineſs of the parliament was to ſettle a regency. The duke of Lancaſter aſpired to be ſole regent; but the parliament thought otherwiſe: much was apprehended from the violence of his temper; and more from his unpopular maxims of government. The regency therefore was put into commiſſion, and he had only one voice in the management of affairs.

The duke of Lancaſter's fall from his former height of power was a ſignal to the biſhops to begin anew their perſecution againſt Wicliff; and articles of accuſation were immediately drawn up, and diſpatched to Rome. How very heartily the pope engaged in this buſineſs may be inferred, from his ſending on this occaſion not fewer than five bulls into England: of theſe, three were directed to the archbiſhop of Canterbury and the biſhop of London; a fourth to the univerſity of Oxford; and a fifth to the king.

Together

Together with his bulls to the biſhops, he ſent a copy of the heretical articles; requiring thoſe prelates to inform themſelves, whether Wicliff really held the doctrines therein contained; and, if he did, forthwith to impriſon him; or if they failed in that, to cite him to make his perſonal appearance at Rome within three months.

In his bull to the chancellor, and other heads of the univerſity, he expoſtulates with ſome warmth upon their ſuffering tares to ſpring up with the wheat, and even to grow ripe without rooting them out. It gives him great uneaſineſs, he ſays, that this evil was publicly ſpoken of at Rome, before any remedy had been applied in England. He bids them conſider the conſequences of Wicliff's doctrines; that they tended to nothing leſs than the ſubverſion both of church and ſtate: and enjoins them laſtly, to forbid the preaching of ſuch tenets for the future within their diſtricts; and to aſſiſt the biſhops in bringing Wicliff to condign puniſhment.

To the king he addreſſed himſelf in very obliging language, and exhorted him to ſhew his zeal for the faith, and the holy ſee,

ſee, by giving his countenance to the proſecution commencing againſt Wicliff.

Of the ſucceſs of theſe bulls the pope had little doubt. The court of Rome had never been accuſtomed to contradiction. Deſpotic in all its commands, it had only to dictate, and the proudeſt monarch was ready to obey. But a new ſcene of things was now opening; and a more liberal ſpirit taking poſſeſſion of the minds of men. It muſt have been a ſenſible mortification to the haughty pontiff, to ſee the neglect with which he was treated on this occaſion. Oppoſitions to his exactions he had ſometimes found before; but this was the firſt time he had ever been treated with contempt. The univerſity deliberated, whether it ſhould even receive his bull; and by what appears it did not. And the regency were ſo little diſpoſed to ſhew him any reverence, that they joined with the parliament at this very time, in giving a ſignal inſtance of their confidence in Wicliff, as if on purpoſe to make their contempt as notorious as poſſible. The inſtance was this.

A truce with France at this juncture expiring, that nation took the advantage of a minority,

minority, and was making mighty preparations to invade England. As the country was far from being in a poſture of defence, all the money that could be raiſed was wanted. The parliament deliberating about the means, it was debated in the houſe, whether, upon an emergency, the money collected in England for the uſe of the pope, might not be applyed to the ſervice of the nation. The expediency of the meaſure was acknowledged by all, but the legality of it was doubted. At laſt it was agreed both by the regency and the parliament, to put the queſtion to Wicliff. It appears as if they only wanted the authority of an able caſuiſt to give a ſanction to a reſolution already made; a ſanction very eaſily obtained from the caſuiſt they conſulted.

But whatever diſreſpect was paid to the pope's bulls by the king and the univerſity of Oxford, the zeal of the biſhops made ample amends. The biſhop of London eſpecially complyed not only with the letter, but entered into the ſpirit of the pontiff's mandate.

He had taken however only the firſt ſtep in this buſineſs, when he received a peremptory order from the duke of Lancaſter, not

to

to proceed to impriſonement. To impriſon a man for holding an opinion, the duke told him, could not be juſtified by the laws of England: he took the liberty therefore to inform him, that if he proceeded to any ſuch extremity, he muſt abide the conſequences.

This menace alarmed the biſhop: he dropt the deſign of an impriſonment; and contented himſelf with citing Wicliff to make his appearance, on ſuch a day, before a provincial ſynod in the chapel at Lambeth; ſending him at the ſame time a copy of the articles, which had been objected to, and deſiring his explanation of them.

On the day appointed Wicliff appeared; and being queſtioned about the articles he delivered in a paper, which explained the ſenſe, in which he held them.

It would be tedious to tranſcribe this collection of antiquated opinions; many of which, at this day, would ſeem of little importance. The curious reader may ſee them at large in the firſt volume of Fox's acts and monuments. We cannot however avoid obſerving, that Wicliff by no means appears in the moſt favourable light on this occaſion.

caſion*. He explains many of the articles in a forced, unnatural manner, with much art, and in a very unmanly ſtrain of compliment.—On the other hand, it muſt not be concealed, that his advocates call in queſtion the authenticity of this explanation: and have at leaſt to ſay for themſelves, that it is ſolely conveyed down through the channel of popiſh writers.

While the biſhops were deliberating upon Wicliff's confeſſion, which, however cautiouſly worded, was far from being ſatisfactory, (an argument, by the way, againſt the authenticity of that confeſſion, which is handed down to us) the people both within doors, and without, grew very tumultuous, crying aloud, they would ſuffer no violence to be done to Wicliff.

* The ingenious Mr. Hume, alluding to this paſſage of his life, tells us, that "Wicliff, notwithſtanding his enthuſiaſm, ſeems not to have been actuated by the ſpirit of martyrdom; and in all ſubſequent trials before the prelates, he ſo explained away his doctrine by tortured meanings, as to render it quite innocent and inoffenſive." Mr. Hume's cenſure, without queſtion, hath ſome foundation in hiſtory; which affords in this inſtance a very good handle to any one, who is glad of an opportunity of traducing the memory of this reformer.

At this juncture Sir Lewis Clifford, a gentleman about the court, entered the chapel, and in an authoritative manner forbidding the biſhops to proceed to any definitive ſentence, retired. Sir Lewis was very well known to many there preſent; and the biſhops taking it for granted, that he came properly authorized, (which yet does not appear) were in ſome confuſion at the meſſage. The tumult at the door in the mean time increaſing, and adding to their perplexity, at length they diſſolved the aſſembly; having forbidden Wicliff to preach any more thoſe doctrines which had been objected to him. To this prohibition, it ſeems, he paid little reſpect; going about barefooted, as we are informed, in a long frieze-gown, preaching every where occaſionally to the people, and without any reſerve in his own pariſh. His zeal it is probable, might now break out with the greater warmth, as he might tax his late behaviour, if the account we have is genuine, with the want of proper freedom.

In the year 1378, pope Gregory the XIth died, and was ſucceeded by the archbiſhop of

of Barri, a Neapolitan, who took upon him the name of Urban VI. This pontiff, a man of an haughty temper, began his reign in ſo arbitrary a manner, that he alienated from him the affections of his ſubjects. The cardinals in particular ſo highly reſented his behaviour, that a majority of them reſolved to run any lengths rather than bear it longer. They found therefore, or pretended to find, ſome flaw in his election; and aſſembling at Avignon, where the popes had often reſided, declared the election of Urban void, and choſe Clement VII. This was a paſſionate meaſure; and produced, as paſſionate meaſures commonly do, deſtructive conſequences. The two popes, laying an equal claim to St. Peter's chair, began to ſtrengthen their reſpective parties: their quarrel immediately became the cauſe of God, found adherents in all parts of Europe, occaſioned deluges of blood, and gave a more fatal blow to popery than any thing had yet done.

Wicliff, it may eaſily be ſuppoſed, was among thoſe who took moſt offence at this unchriſtian ſchiſm. He conſidered it as a new argument againſt popery; and as ſuch he failed not to uſe it. A tract ſoon appear-

ed in his name againſt the ſchiſm of the Roman pontiffs, in which he ſhewed what little credit was due to either of the contending parties. This tract was eagerly read by all ſorts of people, and tended not a little to open the eyes of the vulgar.

About the end of the year Wicliff was ſeized with a violent diſtemper, which, it was feared, might have proved fatal. Upon this occaſion, we are told, he was honoured by a very extraordinary deputation. The begging friars, it ſeems, whom he had heretofore ſo ſeverely treated, ſent four of their order, accompanied by four of the moſt eminent citizens of Oxford, to attend him; who having gained admittance to his bed-chamber, acquainted him, that hearing he lay at the point of death, they were come in the name of their order, to put him in mind of the many injuries he had done them; and hoped for his ſoul's ſake, that he would do them all the juſtice now in his power, by retracting in the preſence of thoſe reſpectable perſons, the many ſevere and unjuſt things he had ſaid of them. Wicliff ſurpriſed at this ſolemn meſſage, raiſed himſelf in his bed; and we are informed, with a

ſtern

ſtern countenance cried out, "I ſhall not die, but live to declare the evil deeds of the friars." The unexpected force of his expreſſion, together with the ſternneſs of his manner, the ſtory adds, drove away the friars in confuſion.

Soon after his recovery, Wicliff ſet about a great work, which he had long intended, the tranſlation of the ſcriptures into Engliſh. It had ever given him great offence, and indeed he always conſidered it as one of the capital errors of popery, that the bible ſhould be locked up from the people. He reſolved therefore to free it from this bondage. But before his grand work appeared, he publiſhed a tract, in which, with great ſtrength of argument, he ſhewed the neceſſity of engaging in it. The bible he affirmed contained the whole of God's will. Chriſt's law he ſaid was ſufficient to guide his church; and every chriſtian might there gather knowledge enough to make him acceptable to God: and as to comments, he ſaid, a good life was the beſt guide to the knowledge of ſcripture; or, in his own language; "He that keepeth righteouſneſs hath the true underſtanding of holy writ."

When he thought theſe arguments were ſufficiently digeſted, his great work came abroad much to the ſatisfaction of all ſober men.

Some have contended, that Wicliff was not the firſt tranſlator of the bible into Engliſh. The truth ſeems to be, that he was the firſt, who tranſlated the whole together; of which, it is probable, others might have given detached parts. It does not however appear, that Wicliff underſtood the Hebrew language. His method was, to collect what Latin bibles he could find: from theſe he made one correct copy; and from this tranſlated. He afterwards examined the beſt commentators then extant, particularly Nicolas Lyra; and from them inſerted in his margin thoſe paſſages, in which the Latin differed from the Hebrew.

In his tranſlation of the bible he ſeems to have been literally exact. In his other works, his language was wonderfully elegant for the times in which he lived: but here he was ſtudious only of the plaineſt ſenſe; which led him often, through the confuſion of idioms, within the limits of nonſenſe. *Quid nobis & tibi,*

tibi, Jeſu fili Dei, we find tranſlated thus, *What to us, and to thee, Jeſus the Son of God.*

This work, it may eaſily be imagined, had no tendency to reinſtate him in the good opinion of the clergy. An univerſal clamour was immediately raiſed. Knighton, a canon of Leiceſter, and nearly a contemporary with Wicliff, hath left us, upon record, the language of the times. "Chriſt intruſted his goſpel, (ſays that eccleſiaſtic,) to the clergy, and doctors of the church, to miniſter it to the laity, and weaker ſort, according to their exigences, and ſeveral occaſions. But this maſter John Wicliff, by tranſlating it has made it vulgar; and has laid it more open to the laity, and even to women, who can read, than it uſed to be to the moſt learned of the clergy, and thoſe of the beſt underſtanding; and thus the goſpel jewel, the evangelical pearl, is thrown about, and trodden under foot of ſwine." Such language was looked upon as good reaſoning by the clergy of that day, who ſaw not with what ſatyr it was edged againſt themſelves.

The biſhops, in the mean time, and mitred abbots, not content with railing, took more effectual pains to ſtop this growing

evil. After much conſultation, they brought a bill into parliament to ſuppreſs Wicliff's bible. The advocates for it ſet forth, in their uſual manner, the alarming proſpect of hereſy, which this verſion of the ſcriptures opened; and the ruin of all religion, which muſt inevitably enſue.

Theſe zealots, were anſwered by the principal reformers, who judiciouſly encountered them with their own weapons. It appears, ſaid the Wiclivites, from the decretals, that more than ſixty different ſpecies of hereſy ſprang up in the church, after the tranſlation of the bible into Latin. But theſe hereſies were never charged upon that tranſlation. With what face therefore, they aſked, could the biſhops pretend to diſcountenance an Engliſh tranſlation, when they could not produce one argument againſt it, which did not equally conclude againſt the Latin one? —This reaſoning ſilenced all oppoſition; and the bill was thrown out by a great majority.

The zeal of the biſhops to ſuppreſs Wicliff's bible only made it, as is uſually the caſe, the more ſought after. They who were able, among the reformers, purchaſed copies; and they who were not able, procured at leaſt tranſcripts

tranſcripts of particular goſpels, or epiſtles as their inclinations led. In after times, when Lollardy increaſed, and the flames were kindled, it was a common practice, to faſten about the neck of the condemned heretic, ſuch of theſe ſcraps of ſcripture as were found in his poſſeſſion, which generally ſhared his fate.

Before the clamour, which was raiſed againſt Wicliff, on the account of his bible, was in any degree ſilenced, he ventured a ſtep farther; and attacked that favourite doctrine of the Roman church the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation.

About the year 820 this ſtrange opinion was firſt heard of. Paſchaſe Radbert has the beſt claim to the honour of giving it birth. This wild enthuſiaſt publiſhed it, not as falſhood generally gains ground, by little and little; but at once glaring in its full abſurdity. He informed the world in plain language, that the elements after conſecration, are inſtantly changed into the body and blood of Chriſt; that very body, which was born of Mary, ſuffered upon the croſs, and roſe from the dead.—It is amazing, that an opinion ſo big with abſurdity, and yet unaided by prejudice,

prejudice, could faſten upon the minds of men, however rude of ſcience. Yet the improbable tale, we find, went down; as if the greater the improbability, the more venerable the myſtery. It was found a doctrine well adapted to impreſs the people with that awful and ſuperſtitious horror, which is the neceſſary foundation of falſe religion: as ſuch the church of Rome with great zeal upheld it; and if any were ſtaggered by the appearance of an impoſſibility, they were preſently told, that, "The accidents, or forms of bread and wine, it was true, ſtill remained after conſecration; but by the omnipotence of God they remained without a ſubject." This was the argument of the clergy; and it was thought concluſive, for who could doubt the omnipotence of God?

Wicliff, after a thorough examination of this doctrine was entirely ſatisfied, that it had no ſcriptural foundation. In his lectures therefore before the univerſity of Oxford, in the year 1381, which he ſeems ſtill to have continued every ſummer as profeſſor of divinity, he took upon him to confute this error; and to explain the real deſign of the Lord's ſupper. He principally endeavoured

voured to eſtabliſh, that the ſubſtance of the bread and wine in the Lord's ſupper remained the ſame after conſecration; and that the body and blood of Chriſt were not ſubſtantially in them, but only figuratively. Theſe concluſions he offered to defend publicly in the ſchools. But the religious, who were now, it ſeems, getting ground in the univerſity, would not ſuffer any queſtion of this kind to be moved: upon which Wicliff, without further ceremony, publiſhed a treatiſe upon that ſubject; in which he went great lengths, and attacked the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation with all the freedom of a man, not heſitating, but fully convinced of the truth of what he maintained.

Dr. Barton was at that time, vice-chancellor of Oxford. He was a perſon of great zeal againſt innovations in religion; which he conſidered as the ſymptoms of its ruin; and had always uſed a bitterneſs of expreſſion in ſpeaking of Wicliff; which eaſily ſhewed with how much pleaſure he would take hold of any fair occaſion againſt him. He called together therefore the heads of the univerſity; and, finding he could influence a majority, obtained a decree, by which

Wicliff's

Wicliff's doctrine was condemned as heretical, and himſelf and his hearers threatened, if they perſiſted in their errors, with impriſonment, and excommunication.

Wicliff, we are told, was greatly mortified on finding himſelf thus treated at Oxford, which had till now been his ſanctuary. He had one reſource however ſtill left, his generous patron the duke of Lancaſter; to whom he reſolved to fly for protection, and through the hopes of whoſe intereſt he appealed to the king from the vice-chancellor's ſentence.

While Wicliff and his followers, who were now very numerous, were thus cenſured at Oxford, a calumny was raiſed againſt them, which might have proved of more dangerous conſequence. It took its riſe from an inſurrection, which at this time alarmed the whole kingdom.

Vexed by the ſevere exaction of a ſevere impoſt, the counties of Kent and Suſſex took arms. Their body increaſed as it moved; and under the conduct of one Tiler, approached London with a force greatly ſuperior to any tumultuary troops that could be brought againſt it. Here the rebels, having

having done infinite miſchief, and brought even the government to a treaty, were diſperſed by the mere addreſs and reſolution of the young king. The behaviour of Richard, on this occaſion ought never to be omitted even in a ſlight account of theſe things, as it is the only part of his whole life, that deſerves recording.

When all danger was over, and the thoughts of the miniſtry were now turned upon puniſhing the guilty, great pains were taken by the enemies of Wicliff, to fix the odium of this inſurrection upon him; but with very little effect: for after the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny, nothing was produced to prove their accuſation, but that one Ball, a prieſt, was ſeized among the rebels, whom the archbiſhop of Canterbury had formerly thrown into priſon for preaching Wicliff's doctrines. But it appeared, that Ball was a conceited, empty fellow, who through motives of vanity was ready to adopt any ſingularity. And indeed the whole tenor of hiſtory has exculpated Wicliff, and his diſciples on this head, by aſſigning other and more probable cauſes of this rebellion.

We

We left Wicliff, in the midſt of his diſtreſſes, carrying up an appeal from the univerſity to the king. But his appeal, it ſeems, met with no countenance. The duke of Lancaſter finding his credit declining, ſuppoſed probably that the protection he afforded Wicliff might be the principal cauſe of its decline; perhaps too he might think this bold reformer, by attacking tranſubſtantiation, had gone greater lengths than could well be warranted: it is certain however, that he now for the firſt time deſerted him; and when Wicliff preſſed his highneſs in the affair, and urged him with religious motives, he was anſwered cooly, that of theſe things the church was the moſt proper judge, and that the beſt advice he could give him was to quit theſe novelties, and ſubmit quietly to his ordinary. Wicliff finding himſelf thus expoſed, had only to wrap himſelf in his own integrity, and puſh through the ſtorm as he was able.

It was a circumſtance greatly againſt him, that William Courtney was at this time promoted to the ſee of Canterbury; Simon of Sudbury, his predeceſſor, having been murdered by the rebels in the late inſurrection. Courtney,

Courtney, when biſhop of London, had been Wicliff's moſt active adverſary; and was now glad to find his hands ſtrengthened by the addition of ſo much power, were it only for the ability it gave him to cruſh the Wiclivites. He highly approved therefore of what the vice-chancellor of Oxford had done, and reſolved to go vigorouſly on with the proſecution.

His piety however allowed Wicliff ſome reſpite. So ſcrupulous was the primate, even in matters of form, that he forbore any public exerciſe of his office, till he ſhould receive the conſecrated pall from Rome; which did not arrive till the May of the next year, 1382.

Being thus duly inveſted, Wicliff was cited to appear before him in the monaſtery of the grey friers, on the 17th day of the ſame month: ſo eager was the archbiſhop to enter upon this buſineſs!

But before we proceed in the relation, it may not be improper to inform the reader, that we find great obſcurity in the accounts of this part of Wicliff's life, many of theſe accounts differing from each other; and many being plainly contradictory. All therefore,

fore, which in ſuch a caſe can be done, is to ſelect, from a variety of circumſtances, ſuch as ſeem moſt probable, and beſt founded.

Wicliff being thus cited before the archbiſhop, refuſed to appear; alledging that as he was a member of the univerſity, and held an office in it, he was exempt from epiſcopal juriſdiction. The univerſity was now, it ſeems, under different influence; the vice-chancellor was changed; and the determination of the majority was to ſupport their member. With this plea therefore the archbiſhop remained ſatisfied.

But though he could not proceed againſt the perſon of Wicliff, he reſolved however to proceed againſt his opinions. When the court therefore met on the appointed day, a large collection of articles, extracted from his books and ſermons, was produced.

In the inſtant, as the biſhops and divines, of which this court conſiſted, were about to enter upon buſineſs, a violent earthquake ſhook the monaſtery. The affrighted biſhops threw down their papers; cryed out, the buſineſs was diſpleaſing to God; and came to a haſty reſolution to proceed no farther.

The

The archbiſhop alone remained unmoved. With equal ſpirit and addreſs he chid their ſuperſtitious fears; and told them, that if the earthquake portended any thing, it portended the downfall of hereſy; that as noxious vapours are lodged in the bowels of the earth, and are expelled by theſe violent concuſſions, ſo by their ſtrenuous endeavours, the kingdom ſhould be purified from the peſtilential taint of hereſy, which had infected it in every part.

This ſpeech, together with the news, that the earthquake had been general through the city, as it was afterwards indeed found to have been through the iſland, diſpelled their fears. Wicliff would often merrily ſpeak of this accident; and would call this aſſembly, the council of the herydene; herydene being the old Engliſh word for earthquake.

The court, again compoſed, entered warmly into the buſineſs; and went through the examination of all the articles. In fine, they came to a determination, that ſome of them were erroneous; and ſome plainly heretical.

This determination was publiſhed, and afterwards anſwered by Wicliff, who ſhewed how much his enemies had miſrepreſented

him in ſeveral points; and defended his opinions with a ſpirit of truth and freedom, which brought over many to his party.

The primate took new offence at this audacity, as he called it, of Wicliff; and being determined at all events to cruſh him, preferred a bill in parliament to enable ſheriffs (upon proper information from biſhops) to proceed as far as impriſonment againſt the preachers of hereſy. This bill paſſed the lords, but was rejected by the commons; who, being already jealous of the power of the clergy, were in no degree inclined to make any addition to it.

The archbiſhop, notwithſtanding this check, applied to the king for his licence, which he imagined would be full as effectual, though not ſo plauſible, as an act of parliament. The king, immerſed in pleaſures, thought only of tenths and ſubſidies, and could refuſe nothing to the clergy, who were ſo ready on all occaſions to comply with him. Letters patent therefore were immediately made out, granting the full powers, which the archbiſhop required.

The practice heretofore had been, in caſes of this kind, for the king to grant ſpecial licences

licences on particular occaſions. This unlimited power therefore, before unheard of, was very diſagreeable to the whole nation. Accordingly, when the parliament met, which it did ſoon after, heavy complaints came from every county to their repreſentatives, ſetting forth, how much the people thought themſelves aggrieved.

The alarm ſpread through the houſe, where the affair was taken up with a becoming zeal. "Theſe new powers, it was ſaid, were dangerous encroachments.—If the liberties of the people were thus put into the hands of the clergy, the nation became ſubject to a new kind of deſpotiſm.—Hereſy was an unlimited word, and might bear as wide a conſtruction as a biſhop might chuſe to give it: nor could it be doubted, but it would often be made to ſignify whatever the pride, or avarice of the clergy might think expedient."

This language was carried in a petition from the commons to the king. The king, as was uſual, being in want of money, and afraid at this time of diſobliging the commons, revoked the licence through the hope of a ſubſidy from the laity, which he had

juſt before granted through the hope of an aid from the clergy.—Such were the weak politics of Richard; and thus was the archbiſhop's zeal baffled a ſecond time.

In one point however the primate ſucceeded better. He obtained letters from the king, directed to the vice-chancellor and proctors of the univerſity of Oxford, by which they were required to make diligent ſearch in their colleges and halls for all who maintained heretical opinions; particularly thoſe condemned by the archbiſhop of Canterbury; and for all, who had in their poſſeſſion the books of John Wicliff. Such delinquents were ordered to be expelled the univerſity; and the ſheriff and mayor of Oxford were commanded to aſſiſt the academical magiſtrates in the execution of this order. The archbiſhop alſo himſelf wrote to the vice chancellor, injoining him to publiſh in St. Mary's church the king's letter, and alſo thoſe articles of Wicliff's doctrine, which had been condemned. The vice-chancellor modeſtly anſwered, that party at this time ran ſo high in Oxford, where the ſeculars, who generally favoured Wicliff, bore a principal ſway, that ſuch a publication would not only be very

very dangerous to himſelf, but would greatly endanger alſo the peace of the univerſity.

In anſwer to this, the violent primate called him before the council, where he was vexed and queſtioned with all the inhumanity of inſolent authority. This brought him to a compliance; and every thing was publiſhed, and in what manner, the archbiſhop required.

The vice-chancellor's fears however were well grounded. The ſecular clergy were ſo exceedingly incenſed againſt the religious, that the univerſity became a ſcene of the utmoſt tumult: all ſtudy was at an end: and to ſuch an height were the animoſities of the two parties carried, that they diſtinguiſhed themſelves by badges, and were ſcarce controuled from breaking out into the moſt violent effects of rage.

Whether Wicliff was ever brought to any public queſtion in conſequence of theſe proceedings, we meet with no account. It is moſt probable he was adviſed by his friends to retire from the ſtorm. It is certain however, that at this time he quitted the profeſſor's chair, and took his final leave of the univerſity of Oxford; which till now he ſeems

to have viſited generally once every year. —Thus the unwearied perſecution of the archbiſhop prevailed; and that prelate had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing the man whom he hated, and whom, for ſo many years he had in vain purſued, retreating at length before his power into an obſcure part of the kingdom.—The ſeeds however were ſcattered, though the root was drawn. Wicliff's opinions began now to be propagated ſo univerſally over the nation, that as a writer of thoſe times tells us, if you met two perſons upon the road, you might be ſure that one of them was a lollard.

While theſe things were doing in England the diſſention between the two popes continued. Thus far they had fought with ſpiritual weapons only, bulls, anathemas, and excommunications; and thus far their contention had excited only contempt. But Urban perceiving how little the thunders of the church availed, had recourſe to more ſubſtantial arms. With this view he publiſhed a bull, in which he called upon all, who had any regard for religion, to exert themſelves at this

this time in its cauſe; and take up arms againſt Clement, and his adherents, in defence of the holy ſee. The times, he ſaid, required violent meaſures; and for the encouragement of the faithful he promiſed the ſame pardons and indulgences, which had been always granted to thoſe, who loſt their lives in the holy wars. This bull met with great encouragement in England, eſpecially as the pope choſe an eccleſiaſtic of that nation for his general. Henry Spencer, biſhop of Norwich; "a young and ſtout prelate, ſays Fox, fitter for the camping cure, than for the peaceable church of Chriſt." This officer having obtained a parliamentary aſſiſtance, and made his levies, ſet out with great eagerneſs upon his expedition.

A war in which the name of religion was ſo vilely proſtituted, rouſed Wicliff's indignation, even in the decline of years. He took up his pen once more, and wrote againſt it with great acrimony. He expoſtulates with the pope in a very free manner, and aſks him boldly, "How he durſt make the token of Chriſt on the croſs (which is a token of peace, mercy, and charity) a banner to lead on to ſlay chriſtian men, for the love

of two falſe prieſts; and to oppreſs chriſtendom worſe than Chriſt and his apoſtles were oppreſſed by the Jews? When, ſays he, will the proud prieſt of Rome grant indulgences to mankind to live in peace and charity, as he now does to fight and ſlay one another?"

This ſevere piece drew upon him the reſentment of Urban, and was likely to have involved him in greater troubles than he had yet experienced: but God himſelf delivered his faithful ſervant. He was ſtruck with a palſy, ſoon after the publication of this treatiſe; and though he lived ſome time, yet he lived in ſuch a way, that his enemies conſidered him as a perſon below their reſentment. To the laſt he attended divine worſhip; and received the fatal ſtroke of his diſorder in his church at Lutterworth, in the year 1384.

The papiſts of thoſe times gloried much in the circumſtances of his death. "It was reported, one of them tells us, that he had prepared accuſations and blaſphemies, which he intended on the day he was taken ill, to have uttered in his pulpit, againſt Thomas a Becket, the ſaint and martyr of the day; but by the judgment of God he was ſuddenly ſtruck, and the palſy ſeized all his limbs;

limbs; and that mouth which was to have ſpoken huge things againſt God, and his ſaints, and holy church was miſerably drawn aſide, and afforded a frightful ſpectacle to the beholders: His tongue was ſpeechleſs, and his head ſhook, ſhewing plainly that the curſe of God was upon him."

Thus did his enemies, in the true ſpirit of ſuperſtition, turn the moſt common ſymptoms of a common malady into a divine judgment; and diſcover, by calling in ſuch feeble aids, how much in earneſt their cauſe wanted a ſupport.

Such was the life of John Wicliff; whom we heſitate not to admire as one of the greateſt ornaments of his country; and as one of thoſe prodigies, whom providence raiſes up, and directs as its inſtruments to enlighten mankind. His amazing penetration; his rational manner of thinking; and the noble freedom of his ſpirit, are equally the objects of our admiration. Wicliff was in religion, what Bacon was afterwards in ſcience; the great detecter of thoſe arts and gloſſes, which the

the barbariſm of ages had drawn together to obſcure the mind of man.

To this intuitive genius Chriſtendom was unqueſtionably more obliged than to any name in the liſt of reformers. He explored the regions of darkneſs, and let in not a feeble and glimmering ray; but ſuch an effulgence of light, as was never afterwards obſcured. He not only looſened prejudices; but advanced ſuch clear inconteſtible truths, as, having once obtained footing, ſtill kept their ground, and even in an age of reformation wanted little amendment. How nearly his ſentiments, almoſt on every topic agreed with thoſe of the reformers of the ſucceeding century, hath been made the ſubject of ſet enquiries, and will eaſily appear from a general view of his opinions.

As the opinions of Wicliff make a very material part of his life, it may be proper to give a fuller account of them, in a ſeparate view, than could well be introduced in the body of the work. The following therefore, which are all either collected from his own words, or by a fair deduction from them, are the principal opinions which this reformer held.

With

With regard to the church, he was not fond of applying the words *church* and *churchmen*, merely to the clergy. As theſe were often men of bad lives, he thought ſuch application a vile proſtitution of thoſe ſacred names. Beſides, it had bad influence, he thought, upon the laity; ſeeming to exclude them from the pale of Chriſt's church, and to give them a diſpenſation for licentious practice. If they were not of Chriſt's church, they were not under Chriſt's laws. He would never therefore have any idea fixed to the word *church*, but that of the whole body of Chriſtians. In ſome of his writings he makes a diſtinction between the true church of Chriſt, and the nominal. By the true church he means ſuch perſons only as God ſhall pleaſe to ſave. Chriſt's nominal church he calls a net, yet undrawn to land, full of every kind, which muſt afterwards be picked and ſeparated.

He was a warm aſſertor of the king's ſupremacy; to prove which he reaſoned thus. Under the old law, we read that Solomon depoſed one high prieſt, and ordained another, by his own proper authority, without the concurrence of any eccleſiaſtical ſynod: and

and in the new teſtament, though we meet with no expreſs command on the point of the king's ſupremacy; yet in general we are told, that magiſtrates are ordained of God to puniſh evil doers; and that without any limitation. If then they are ordained to puniſh evil doers without any reſtriction, certainly they are in the higheſt degree bound to puniſh thoſe who do the moſt evil: and who will contend, that the wicked prieſt is not a worſe citizen, than the wicked layman? Chriſt, ſays he, and his apoſtles were obedient to the temporal powers then exiſting: and not to mention the many precepts of the goſpel writers on this ſubject, which ſeem to be generally directed to all Chriſtians; we ſee in one place our Saviour himſelf paying tribute to the emperor; and in another, anſwering before Pilate without claiming any exemption.—Againſt thoſe who maintained the pope's ſupremacy to be an article of faith he was very warm. The ſaving faith of a Chriſtian, ſays he, conſiſts in believing that Chriſt is the Meſſiah: but the Roman church has multiplied articles of faith without number. It is not enough now to believe in Chriſt; we muſt believe

in

in the pope of Rome. The holy apoſtles never aſcribed to themſelves any ſuch honour: how then can a ſinful wretch require it, who knows not whether he ſhall be damned or ſaved? If the pope, ſays he, ſhould happen to be a wicked man, we profeſs it as an article of our belief, that a devil of hell is head of the church—that he is the moſt holy father, infallible, and without ſin, who poiſons the principles of the church, and corrupts its practice, who contributes what he is able to baniſh out of it, faith, meekneſs, patience, charity, humility, and every other virtue of a Chriſtian.

The authority likewiſe claimed by the church Wicliff ſtrenuoſly oppoſed. It was a ſcandal, he would ſay, to the chriſtian church, that any of its members ſhould ſet up their own authority againſt that of their Saviour. The great argument of that day (which was indeed a ſubtle one) for the authority of the church, was this. Many perſons, beſides Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, wrote goſpels; but the church rejected them all, excepting theſe four: and this it did by its own proper authority. It might by the ſame authority have rejected thoſe four goſpels,

goſpels, and have received others. It follows therefore, that the authority of the church is above that of any goſpel.—To this Wicliff replied, that the evidence for the received goſpels was ſo ſtrong, and that for the rejected ones ſo weak, that the church could not have done otherwiſe than it did, without doing violence to reaſon. But the beſt argument, he ſaid, if it were proper to avow it, for ſupporting the authority of the church, was the neceſſity of it to ſupport the tyranny of the pope. This was what made it worth defending at the expence of truth.—In another place, ſpeaking on the ſame ſubject, he ſays, that the pope would not ſubmit his actions to the ſame criterion, by which Chriſt was contented to have his actions tried. If I do not, ſays Chriſt, the works of my father which is in heaven, believe me not. But the pope's authority it ſeems, muſt be acknowledged, though he manifeſtly does the works of the devil. Thus, ſays he, chriſtians are in greater thraldom than the Jews under the old law; and that liberty, by which Chriſt hath made us free, is by the wickedneſs of deſigning men, changed into the moſt abſolute

ſolute ſpiritual bondage. The days, ſays he, I hope, will come, when men will be wiſe enough to ſhake from their necks the dominion of human ordinances; and diſdain ſubmiſſion to any eccleſiaſtical injunctions, but ſuch as are plainly authorized by the word of God.

Wicliff acknowledged ſeven ſacraments; but is very inaccurate in his definition of a ſacrament; which he calls, *A token that may be ſeen of a thing that may not be ſeen.* This inaccuracy however, is not peculiar to Wicliff. We meet with it univerſally amongſt the old writers in divinity, both before and after his time; whoſe idea of a ſacrament ſeems to have been extremely vague: from Wicliff's logical exactneſs we might have expected a more accurate definition.

But though he thus acknowledges ſeven ſacraments, he expreſly ſays, he does not eſteem them all neceſſary to ſalvation; and inveighs warmly againſt the many idle ceremonies uſed by the church of Rome in the adminiſtration of them all; ceremonies, he ſays, which have no uſe in themſelves, nor any foundation in ſcripture. When ceremonies are few and expreſſive, he thinks, they

they may be of uſe; and enumerates, among others, kneeling, and beating the breaſt in prayer.

With regard to baptiſm, he thought it neceſſary to ſalvation. This he grounded on the expreſſion, *Except a man be born of water and the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*; which he underſtood of material water. But he oppoſed the ſuperſtition of three immerſions. In caſe of neceſſity, he thought, any one preſent might baptize. The prieſt, he ſaid, in baptiſm (as indeed in all the other ſacraments) adminiſtered only the token, or ſign; but God, who is the prieſt, and biſhop of our ſouls, adminiſtered the ſpiritual grace. This gave occaſion to his enemies to repreſent him (which they did with great falſhood) as denying any uſe of material water. When he ſpeaks of water, ſay they, he means only figuratively the water, which flowed from the ſide of Chriſt.—With regard to the queſtion, whether unbaptized infants could be ſaved, he waves it, adding, that he thinks it probable, Chriſt may ſpiritually baptize ſuch infants, and conſequently ſave them. This opinion too might afford ſome foundation

tion to the ſlander above-mentioned; though he guards againſt it by ſaying, that we muſt not neglect baptiſm by water, on a ſuppoſition, that we are baptized by the ſpirit.

Of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, we have* already ſeen his opinion. But though it appears from the account given of his creed in this point, that he thought bread and wine only ſigns of Chriſt's body; yet in other parts of his writings we find him ſpeaking of them in a much higher ſtrain. The truth ſeems to be, that he was late in ſettling his notions of the Lord's ſupper: whence it is, that in different parts of his writings he contradicts himſelf. This appears to be the foundation of Melancthon's complaint. "I have looked, ſays he, into Wicliff; and find him very confuſed in this controverſy of the Lord's ſupper."

With regard to confirmation, he thought the oil, and the veil, made uſe of by the biſhop had not foundation in ſcripture, and were better omitted; and that the other ceremonies, together with all the parade and pomp, which accompany this ſacrament,

* See page 42.

were ſtill worſe, tending only to fix the minds of the people upon trifles, and to impreſs on them a ſuperſtitious veneration for the clergy. He could ſee no reaſon, why the prieſt might not confirm, as well as baptize; baptiſm, he ſaid, muſt be acknowledged to be the ſacrament of greater dignity, inaſmuch as it is of authentic goſpel inſtitution.

Speaking of matrimony, he inveighs warmly againſt granting divorces on ſlight occaſions, as was cuſtomary in the church of Rome; and ſays, that a divorce can be juſtified on no cauſe, but that of adultery.

In extreme unction he ſees nothing unſcriptural: at leaſt I meet with nothing of objection to it, in any part of his writings which I have ſeen. Only indeed, he blames the exorbitant fees, which the avarice of the prieſts of thoſe times exacted for the performance of it.

Speaking likewiſe of orders, he inveighs againſt the ſame avarice; and jocularly ſays, a man might have a barber to attend him a whole year for what he pays to have his crown ſhaven once.

With

With regard to confeſſion, his opinion was, that if a man be really contrite, external confeſſion is by no means of abſolute neceſſity; yet as it may bring on repentance, he would not reject it, if a proper choice be made of a confeſſor. But as confeſſion was practiſed in the church of Rome, he thought it a vile and ſcandalous method of getting into the ſecrets of families, and tended only to advance the power of the church.

Pennance, he ſays, hath no ſort of merit in God's ſight, unleſs followed by a reformed life.

Of abſolution, as practiſed in the church of Rome, he was a warm oppoſer. It was the height of blaſphemy, he ſaid, to aſcribe to man the power of God, *Who can forgive ſins, but God alone?* Inſtead of acting as God's miniſters, the Romiſh clergy, he ſaid, took upon them, in their own names, to forgive ſins. Nay in the plentitude of their power they will do, ſays he, what God himſelf (if there is truth in ſcripture) would not do—pardon unrepented ſin. Expreſs paſſages of ſcripture in favour of the contrite heart are nothing: God's abſolution is of no

effect, unleſs confirmed by theirs. Preſumptuous guides, ſays he, they ought to urge the neceſſity of repentance, inſtead of abſolution; and preach a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, the deformity of ſin, and the mercy of God, inſtead of deceiving mankind by their ridiculous impoſtures.

Againſt indulgences, he was very ſevere, a mere trick, he called them, to rob men of their money. The pope, ſays he, has the ſurplus of the merits of pious ſaints to diſpoſe of. A profitable doctrine this; but where found? Certainly not in ſcripture. For my own part, ſays he, I meet not, in the whole new teſtament with one ſaint who had more merit than was neceſſary for his own ſalvation. And if Chriſt, who taught all that was needful and profitable, taught not this doctrine, it may be fairly preſumed, that this doctrine is neither needful nor profitable. All men, as far as the merits of another can avail, are partakers of the merits of Chriſt: and no man can expect more. How abſurd then is it to ſee men ſquander away their money upon indulgences, inſtead of laying it out properly in charitable uſes:

as

as if it were a more acceptable ſervice to God, to add ſuperfluous wealth to a monaſtery, than to diſtribute alms among neceſſitous chriſtians.—Beſides, in how uncharitable a light doth the pope appear if there be one ſoul left in purgatory. A turn of his pen might deliver the ſinner, and if he deny that, it can only be through avarice, and want of a good heart. If he have not power indeed to deliver all men, he is a deceiver; for he declares, that he has ſuch power.—But his pardons, it ſeems, are only to be had for ready money, and granted too, not for the good of mankind, but to promote diſſention and war. Were this boaſted power of pardoning an heavenly gift, like God's other favours, it would certainly be diſpenſed in an impartial manner. Wealth could not command it: and the pope, like the apoſtles, would cry out, "Thy money "periſh with thee." Whether the pope's pardons be diſpenſed in this impartial manner, let the papiſt ſay. They will tell you perhaps, he adds, that the pardons themſelves are a free gift; but that the bull occaſions the expence. Such prevarication puts one in mind of the hoſt, who profeſſed to

treat his guests with a goose for nothing; but charged them without conscience for the sauce.—Thus by the vile trade of indulgences are men deceived. Any one who can pay for a pardon, may laugh at sin. He has found an easy way to heaven; much easier than by contrition, repentance, and works of charity. May we not then, says he, safely conclude, that indulgences were an invention of anti-christ to magnify the sacerdotal power; and to bring in wealth to the church, at the expence of religion, and the souls of men?

With regard to purgatory, he believed in such a state; and, as it appears from some parts of his works, was once of opinion that pious prayers might be serviceable to souls imprisoned there; but in his later writings, he wholly renounces this opinion, and calls it a pernicious error; especially to pray for one person more than another, which he looks upon as a most unchristian practice; though he still seems to think we may pray in general for all those, whom God in his mercy intends for happiness. In short, upon this subject he does not seem to have absolutely fixed his opinion. He saw something extremely

extremely plauſible in the Romiſh doctrine of purgatory; he likewiſe ſaw the abſurdity of ſuppoſing, that God intruſted any man with a power to releaſe ſinners from ſuch a ſtate; but whether the ſouls of the dead might be profited by the prayers of the living, he ſeems to have been in doubt.

He was a great enemy to the endowments of chauntry-prieſts. They led the people, he thought, to put their truſt in ſuch endowments, rather than in a good life: whereas no prayers, even of the holieſt ſaints, he thought, could benefit a bad man. *That man*, ſaith he excellently, *who liveth beſt, prayeth beſt.* A ſimple pater-noſter from a religious plowman, is of more value in the ſight of God, than a thouſand maſſes from a wicked prelate.

He had a great diſlike to chaunting in divine worſhip, which was then commonly uſed in cathedrals and religious houſes; and was known by the name of the new ſong. This ſort of worſhip, he ſays, was originally introduced to impoſe on the underſtanding, by ſubſtituting ſound in the room of ſenſe; and ſo to be one mean of keeping the people in ignorance. He owns it is a merry

way of ſerving God; and therefore, he ſuppoſes, it meets with ſo much encouragement. But he would have men be of St. Auſtin's opinion, who ſays, that as often as ſound drew his attention from ſenſe, ſo often he worſhipped God improperly. If, ſays he, the temple-muſic of the old law be alledged as a ſufficient warrant for cathedral worſhip, it may eaſily be anſwered, that Chriſt, who was the beſt commentator upon the old law, gives us no inſtruction on this head; but tells his diſciples, that he requires no recommendation of prayer, but the devotion of the heart. Others again will perhaps ſay, that the angels praiſe God in heaven: to which, it may as eaſily be anſwered, that we know nothing of heavenly muſick. Only this we know, that the angels are in a triumphant ſtate, and we in a militant one; in a ſtate of trial and affliction, where muſic diverts us from better things. It is grievous, ſays he, to ſee what ſums of money are yearly expended upon theſe ſinging prieſts, and how little upon the education of children. Beſides, he adds, how abſurd is it to hear in a large congregation, only two or three chaunting a piece of

of devotion; while all the reſt, not only cannot join with them; but even do not underſtand what they ſay.

He often inveighs againſt prayers to ſaints, and the uſe of any mediator but Chriſt. He even goes ſo far as to wiſh that all feſtivals in the church were aboliſhed, except Chriſtmas-day, and eaſter. For the devotion of the people, ſays he, being undivided, would be more fervent upon thoſe ſolemn days. As to modern canonizations, he ſays, they owe their birth to nothing but exceſſive bigotry on one ſide, or exceſſive avarice on the other.

With regard to images he thought, that if they were exact repreſentations of the truth, they might be very ſerviceable to give the vulgar ſtrong impreſſions of the poverty, and ſufferings of Chriſt, his apoſtles, and martyrs. But this uſe, he ſays, could not be expected from them in the Roman church. Thoſe gay repreſentations, decked in coſtly apparel, inſtead of giving us the idea of ſuffering ſaints, exhibit to us perſons of pomp and expence; and ſhould be conſidered as heretical books, full of falſe doctrines; and as ſuch ſhould be condemned to the fire.—

Beſides,

Beſides, ſays he, how ſhocking is it to ſee thoſe dumb idols covered with gold and ſilver; while Chriſt's poor members are ſtarving in the ſtreets.—But of all the bad effects which attend images, the worſt, he ſays, is their leading the people into idolatry. If Hezechiah broke in pieces the brazen ſerpent, which God commanded to be made, becauſe it attracted the veneration of the people; how much more ought a chriſtian king to break in pieces thoſe images, which God is ſo far from having commanded to be made, that we have in ſcripture the moſt expreſs commands againſt making them.

He greatly diſliked the ceremonies of conſecration ſo frequent in the church of Rome. Theſe conſecrations, ſays he, and benedictions, in which the Roman church is ſo profuſe upon water, oil, ſalt, wax, veſtments, walls, pilgrims-ſtaves, and a variety of other things, have more the appearance of necromancy, than of true religion. They are abſurd, becauſe theſe things are juſt the ſame after conſecration as before: and they are idolatrous, becauſe they tend to make people pay a divine honour to them.

No

No man could be more ſtrenuous than Wicliff againſt reſting upon the externals of religion; or ſaid more to convince men of the folly of expecting, that building and ornamenting churches, frequenting public worſhip, or any outward expreſſion of religion, would ſatisfy God without the heart, or make any atonement for a bad life. Holy water, ſays he, and the bleſſing of a biſhop are mere impoſitions, tending only to blind the people, and make them reſt in thoſe externals, rather than in God's mercy, and their own repentance.

He aſſerted the neceſſity of being aſſiſted by divine grace. Without this, he ſaw not how a human being could make himſelf acceptable to God.

With regard to pilgrimages, he ſays, that although viſiting the ſhrines of ſaints might be ſuffered with a view to impreſs us ſtrongly with a ſenſe of their virtues; yet pilgrimages, as commonly uſed, are of moſt pernicious conſequence. If idol-worſhip be bad, pilgrimages are equally ſo, leading the people into idolatry, and a miſapplication of their charity.

Againſt

Againſt ſanctuaries he is ſtill warmer. That the groſſeſt crimes ſhould be ſheltered, under the ſafeguard of religion, was, in his opinion, ſuch a perverſion of all the principles of reaſon and chriſtianity, as could not be ſufficiently exclaimed againſt.

He was a great advocate for the marriage of the clergy, and thought the celibacy preſcribed by the Roman church one of the principal cauſes of its corruption.

He denied the power of excommunication to the church; and ſtyles ſuch eccleſiaſtical cenſures, puniſhments inflicted by anti-chriſt's juriſdiction. No man, ſays he, can be excommunicated, unleſs he firſt excommunicate himſelf.

Peter-pence, he calls an iniquitous impoſition, without any foundation in ſcripture.

Theſe are the principal opinions of Wicliff with regard to church doctrines. The following are his opinions on ſeveral miſcellaneous ſubjects.

He was a great enemy to the ſuperfluous wealth of the clergy. He allowed the labourer to live by his labour; but he aſſerted, that

that he had a right to his hire from nothing elſe. Tythes, he ſaid, were only a ſort of alms, no where of goſpel inſtitution, which the people might either give or withdraw, as they found their paſtor deſerved. This opinion drew upon him the reſentment both of papiſts and proteſtants. Melancthon, in particular, is very warm with him on this head; ſays, he raved, and was plainly mad. But it is no wonder, if Wicliff's diſlike to the prevailing luxury of the clergy, which was then ſo exorbitant, led him into an extreme. His conſtant advice to his brethren was, to exact their tythes by the holineſs of their lives. If thou be a prieſt, ſays he, contend with others, not in pomp, but in piety. Ill befits it a man, who lives on the labours of the poor, to ſquander away the dear-bought fruits of their induſtry upon his own extravagancies.

Church endowments, he thought, were the root of all the corruption among the clergy. He often lamented the luxury they occaſioned; and uſed to wiſh the church was again reduced to its primitive poverty, and innocence.

With

With ſtill greater warmth he expreſſed himſelf againſt the ſecular employments of the clergy. This he ſeemed to think an unpardonable deſertion of their profeſſion.

In ſome parts of his writings, he appears to have held, that ſtrange doctrine, *That dominion is founded on grace.* His argument, if I underſtand it all, ſeems to be, that as all things belong to God, and as good men alone are the children of God, they are of courſe the only true inheritors. But in other parts of his writings, it appears, as if he only ſpoke figuratively on this ſubject, and of ideal perfection. That he did not hold the doctrine in its literal ſenſe, ſeems plain from many paſſages of his works. In his Trialogue particularly, he ſays, "Duplici titulo ſtat hominem habere temporalia, ſcilicet titulo originalis juſtitiæ, & titulo mundanæ juſtitiæ. Titulo autem originalis juſtitiæ habuit Chriſtus omnia bona mundi. Illo titulo, vel titulo gratiæ, juſtorum ſunt omnia: ſed longe ab illo titulo civilis poſſeſſio." Upon the whole, however, what he ſays on this ſubject may be called whimſical.

He

He held faſting to be enjoined only for the ſake of virtuous habits; and calls it therefore highly phariſaical to place a greater value upon bodily abſtinence from food, than ſpiritual abſtinence from ſin.

It was a conjecture of his, that this world was created to ſupply the loſs in heaven occaſioned by the fallen angels; and that when that loſs ſhould be ſupplied, the end of things would ſucceed.

Upon a text in the revelations he founded an opinion, that the devil was let looſe about a thouſand years after Chriſt; from which period he dates the riſe of the principal corruptions of the church.

With regard to oaths, he conſidered it as plain idolatry to ſwear by any creature. In this ſenſe he underſtood the prohibition of our Saviour againſt ſwearing by heaven and earth. It is not found, ſaith he, in the old law, that God at any time granted his permiſſion to ſwear by any creature.

He ſeems to have thought it wrong, upon the principles of the goſpel, to take away the life of man upon any occaſion. The whole trade of war he thought utterly unlawful:

nor

nor does he ſeem to think the execution of a criminal a more allowed practice.

In ſome parts of his writings he ſpeaks ſo ſtrongly of fate, that he appears an abſolute predeſtinarian. In other parts he expreſſes himſelf in ſo cautious a manner, that we are apt to think he had no fixed principles on this ſubject.

All arts, which adminiſtred to the luxuries of life, he thought were prohibited by the goſpel. The ſcriptures, ſays he, tell us, that having food and raiment, we ſhould be therewith content.

Hereſy, according to Wicliff, conſiſted in a bad life, as well as in falſe opinions. No good man, he thought, could be an heretic.

His opinion, on this laſt point, agrees with that of a prelate of later times, who generally ſpeaks the language of true chriſtian freedom and charity. I ſhall quote ſome paſſages at large from this celebrated writer, not only as they tend to ſhew the juſtneſs of Wicliff's own manner of thinking; but as they may ſerve as a concluſion to this review of his opinions, in being a proper anſwer to all his adverſaries.

"No

" No hereſies, (ſays biſhop Taylor, in his liberty of propheſying) are noted in ſcripture; but ſuch as are errors practical. In all the animadverſions againſt errors in the new teſtament, no pious perſon was condemned. Something was amiſs in genere morum. Hereſy is not an error of the underſtanding, but an error of the will. And indeed, if we remember, that St. Paul reckons hereſy among the works of the fleſh, and ranks it with all manner of practical impieties, we ſhall eaſily perceive, that if a man mingles not a vice with his opinions, if he be innocent in his life, though deceived in his doctrine, his error is his miſery, not his crime; he may be an object of pity, but by no means a perſon conſigned to ruin. —There are as many innocent cauſes of error, as there are weakneſſes, and unavoidable prejudices.—In queſtions practical, the doctrine itſelf, and the perſon too, may be reproved; but in other things, which end in notion, where neither the doctrine is malicious, nor the perſon apparently criminal, he is to be left to the judgment of God. Opinions and perſons are to be judged like other things. It muſt be a crime

and it muſt be open, of which any cognizance can be taken.—Let me farther obſerve that ſince there are ſuch great differences of apprehenſion concerning the conſequences of an action, no man is to be charged with the odious conſequences of his opinion. Indeed his doctrine may be, but the man is not, if he underſtand not ſuch things to be conſequent to his doctrine. For if he did, and then avows them, they are his direct opinions; and he ſtands as chargeable with them, as with his firſt propoſition.—No error then, nor its conſequent, is to be charged as criminal upon a pious perſon, ſince no ſimple error is ſin, nor does condemn us before the throne of God."*

Of

* A very ingenious hiſtorian, hath charged Wicliff with enthuſiaſm. "He denyed the doctrine, (ſays he,) of the "real preſence—the ſupremacy of the church of Rome—"the merit of monaſtic vows.—He maintained; that the "ſcripture was the ſole rule of faith;—that the church "was dependent on the ſtate—and ought to be reformed "by it;—that the clergy ought to poſſeſs no eſtates;—"that the begging friars were a general nuiſance, and "ought not to be ſupported;—that the numerous ceremo-"nies of the church were hurtful to true piety.—He "aſſerted, that oaths were unlawful,—that dominion was "founded in grace;—that every thing was ſubject to fate

"and

Of the Writings of WICLIFF.

Having thus taken a view of Wicliff's opinions, let us conſider him next as a writer. He is amazingly voluminous: yet he ſeems not to have engaged in any very large

" and deſtiny; and that all men were predeſtinated either to " eternal ſalvation or reprobation."

Having given this abſtract of his opinions, which is in general very juſt, the hiſtorian proceeds to inform us, that " From the *whole* of his doctrines, Wicliff appears to have " been *ſtrongly* tinctured with enthuſiaſm."

Mr. Hume has certainly expreſſed himſelf here in a very unguarded manner, unleſs he meant to brand under the name of enthuſiaſm, the whole ſyſtem of the reformation. He hath given us twelve of the opinions of Wicliff, of which only the ſeventh, and two laſt, ſeem to be carried farther, than was done by the more ſober part of the reformers of the ſixteenth century; and indeed, Mr. Hume has been ingenuous enough to own, that, " The doctrines of Wicliff, " being derived from his ſearch into the ſcriptures, and " into eccleſiaſtical antiquity, were nearly the ſame with " thoſe propagated by the reformers in the ſixteenth cen- " tury; ſome of them only carried farther." And yet, " notwithſtanding this, " Upon the *whole*, they were *ſtrongly* " tinctured with enthuſiaſm."

This writer has been charged with reſolving all revealed religion into enthuſiaſm, or ſuperſtition. And indeed his treatment of Wicliff ſeems in ſome degree to juſtify the charge; " He appears, (ſays the hiſtorian,) to have been

" ſtrongly

work: his pieces in general may properly be called tracts. Of theſe many were written in Latin, and many in Engliſh; ſome on ſchool queſtions; others on ſubjects of more general knowledge; but the greateſt part on divinity. It may be ſome amuſement to the reader to ſee what ſubjects he hath choſen. I ſhall give a liſt therefore of the more remarkable

" ſtrongly tinctured with *enthuſiaſm*, and to have been *thereby* " the better qualified to oppoſe a church, whoſe diſtinguiſh- " ing character was *ſuperſtition*." It was his enthuſiaſm, it ſeems, and not his rational arguments, (for our hiſtorian appears to have thrown reaſon out of both ſides of the queſtion) that made him a formidable adverſary to the church of Rome.

If Mr. Hume had not been under the influence of prejudice, it is impoſſible but a perſon of his liberal caſt of mind, muſt have admired the noble freedom, and rational manner, with which this great reformer oppoſed the ſlaviſh principles of his times. Had Wicliff lived in the days of philoſophy, this writer had been among his firſt admirers; but a religioniſt is a formal character; and what in a philoſopher is a manly exerciſe of reaſon, becomes in a modern reformer, irrational zeal, and a ridiculous pretence to inſpiration.

If I have miſtaken Mr. Hume's meaning, I heartily beg his pardon. The reader, judging for himſelf, will lay no farther ſtreſs on what I have ſaid, than fair quotations will authorize againſt Mr. Hume; and fair repreſentations of facts in favour of Wicliff.

markable of them, from the various collections which have been made.

Trialagorum lib. 4.
De religione perfectorum.
De eccleſia & membris.
De diabolo & membris.
De Chriſto & Antichriſto.
De Antichriſto & membris.
Sermones in epiſtolas.
De veritate ſcripturæ.
De ſtatu innocentiæ.
De dotatione eccleſiæ.
De ſtipendiis miniſtrorum.
De epiſcoporum erroribus.
De curatorum erroribus.
De perfectione evangelicâ.
De officio paſtorali.
De ſimonia ſacerdotum.
Super pænitentiis injungendis.
De ſeductione ſimplicium.
Dæmonum aſtus in ſubvertenda religione.
De pontificum Romanorum ſchiſmate.
De ultima ætate eccleſiæ.
Of temptation.
The chartre of hevene.
Of ghoſtly battel.

Of ghoſtly and fleſhly love.
The confeſſion of St. Brandoun.
Active life, and contemplative life.
Virtuous patience.
Of pride.
Obſervationes piæ in X præcepta.
De impedimentis orationis.
De cardinalibus virtutibus.
De actubus animæ.
Expoſitio orationis dominicæ.
De 7 ſacramentis.
De natura fidei.
De diverſis gradibus charitatis.
De defectione a Chriſto.
De veritate & mendacio.
De ſacerdotio Levitico.
De ſacerdotio Chriſti.
De dotatione Cæſareâ.
De verſutiis pſeudocleri.
De immortalitate animæ.
De paupertate Chriſti.
De phyſica naturali.
De eſſentia accidentium.
De neceſſitate futurorum.
De temporis quidditate.
De temporis ampliatione.
De operibus corporalibus.

De operibus ſpiritualibus.
De fide & perfidia.
De ſermone domini in monte.
Abſtractiones logicales.
A ſhort rule of life.
The great ſentence of the curſe expounded
Of good prieſts.
De contrarietate duorum dominorum.
Wicliff's wicket.
De miniſtrorum conjugio.
De religioſis privatis.
Conciones de morte.
De vita ſacerdotum.
De ablatis reſtituendis.
De arte ſophiſtica.
De fonte errorum.
De incarnatione verbi.
Super impoſitis articulis.
De humanitate Chriſti.
Contra concilium terræ-motus.
De ſolutione Satanæ.
De ſpiritu quolibet.
De Chriſtianorum baptiſmo.
De clavium poteſtate.
De blaſphemia.
De paupertate Chriſti.
De raritate & denſitate.

De materia & forma.
De anima.
Octo beatitudines.
De trinitate.
Commentarii in pſalterium.
De abominatione deſolationis.
De civili dominio.
De eccleſiæ dominio.
De divino dominio.
De origine ſectarum.
De perfidia ſectarum.
Speculum de antichriſto.
De virtute orandi.
De remiſſione fraterna.
De cenſuris eccleſiæ.
De charitate fraterna.
De purgatorio piorum.
De Phariſæo & Publicano.

I might have greatly enlarged this catalogue of the works of Wicliff, but the titles I have inſerted, will be ſufficient to give the reader an idea in general of the ſubjects, on which he wrote. To give him an idea of his manner of writing, I have thought proper to inſert the following ſhort treatiſe; in which the reader will have a ſpecimen of that maſterly

maſtery ſtyle, that clearneſs, conciſeneſs, and elegance, (conſidering the times) with which he treated every ſubject. If the reader compare it with the original, he will find, that a few ſentences have been left out, and a few words altered, which were unintelligible; but nothing added.

Why

Why many prieſts have no benefices.

A treatiſe of JOHN WICLIFF.

SOme cauſes why poor prieſts receive not benefices. The firſt for dread of ſymony. The ſecond for dread of miſpending poor mens goods. The third for dread of letting of better occupation that is more light or eaſy, more certain and more profitable.

I. For firſt, If men ſhould come to benefices by gift of prelates, there is dread of ſymony. For commonly they taken the firſt fruits, or other penſions, or holden curates, in their courts or chapels, in offices far fro prieſts life, taught, and enſampled of Chriſt and his apoſtles. So that commonly ſuch benefices comen not freely as Chriſt commandeth, but rather for worldly winning, or flattering of mighty men, and not for kunning of God's law, and true preaching of the goſpel, and enſample of holy life; and therefore commonly theſe prelates, and receivers ben fouled with ſymony, that is curſſed hereſie, as God's law and man's law techen. And now whoever can run to Rome, and bear gold out of the lond, and ſtrive, and plead,

plead, and curſe for tithes, and other temporal profits, that ben cleped with antichriſt's clerks rights of holy church, ſhall have great benefices of cure of many thouſand ſouls, tho he be unable, and of curſed life, and wicked enſample of pride, of covetiſſe, glotony, leachery, and other great ſins. But if there be any ſimple man, that deſireth to live well, and teche truly God's law, he ſhall ben holden an hypocrite, a new teacher, an heretic, and not ſuffered to come to any benefice. But if in any little poor place he liven a poor life, he ſhall be ſo purſued, and ſlandered, that he ſhall be put out by wiles, cantels, frauds, and worldly violence, and impriſoned or brent. And if lords ſhullen preſent clerks to benefices, they wolen have commonly gold in great quantity, and holden theſe curates in ſome worldly office, and ſuffren the wolves of hell to ſtranglen mens ſouls, ſo that they have their office done for nought, and their chappels holden up for vain-glory or hypocriſy; and yet they wolen not preſent a clerk able of God's law, and of good life, and holy enſample to the people; but a kitchen-clerk, or a penny-clerk, or one wiſe in building caſtles,

caſtles, or other worldly doing; tho he kun not read his ſauter, and knoweth not the commandments of God, ne ſacraments of holy church. And yet ſome lords, to colouren their ſymony wole not take for themſelves, but kerchieſs for the lady, or a palfray, or a tun of wine. And when ſome lords woulden preſent a good man, then ſome ladies ben means to have a dancer preſented, or a tripper on tapits, or hunter, or a hawker, or a wild player of ſummer gambels. And thus it ſeemeth, that both prelates, and lords commonly maken ſome curſed antichriſt, or a quick fiend to be maſter of Chriſt's people for to leaden them to hell to Sathanas their maſter; and ſuffer not Chriſt's diſciples to teche Chriſt's goſpel to his children for to ſave their ſouls.

But in this preſenting of evil curates, and holding of curates in worldly office, letting them fro their ghoſtly cure, ben three degrees of traitery agenſt God and his people. The firſt is in prelates and lords, that thus holden curates in their worldly office; for they have their high ſtates in the church, and lordſhips, for to purvey true curates to the people, and to meyntene them in God's law,

law, and punish them, if they failen in their ghostly cure, and by this they holden their lordships of God. Then if they maken evil curates, and holden them in their worldly office, and letten them to lead God's people the rightful way to heaven, but helpen them, and constreynen them to lead the people to hell-ward, by withdrawing of God's word, and by evil ensample geving they ben weiward traytors to God and his people, and vicars of Sathanas.—2. Yet more traitery is in false curates, that geven mede or hire to comen into such worldly offices, and to get lordship and maintenance agenst ordinances, and couchen in lord's courts for to get mo fatte benefices, and purposen not spedly to do their ghostly office. Woe is to the lords that been led with such cursed heretics, antichrists, traytors of God and his people; and traytors to lords themselves; who ben so blinded, that they perceiven not that such traitors, that openly ben false to God, wolen much more been false to them.—3. But the most traitery is in false confessors, that shulden by their office warn prelates, and lords of this great peril, and clerks also that they holden none such curates in their worldly offices.

offices. For they don not this, leſt they leſen lordſhip, and friendſhip, and gifts, and welfare of their ſtinking belly; and ſo they ſellen chriſten ſouls to Sathanas, and maken prelates and lords, and curates to live in ſin and traitery agenſt God and his people, and deceiven them in their ſouls health, and meyntenen them in curſed traitery of God and his people; and thus almoſt all the world goeth to hell for this curſed ſymony of falſe confeſſors. For commonly prelates, lords, and curates ben envenymed with this hereſy of ſymony, and never done very repentance, and ſatisfaction therefore. For when they have a fat benefice geten by ſymony, they forſaken it not as they ben bounden by law, but wittingly uſen forth that ſymony, and liven in riot, covetiſſe, and pride, and don not their office neither in good enſample, ne in true teching. And thus antichriſt's clerks, enemies of Chriſt, and his people, by money and flattering, and fleſhly love, gedring to them leading of the people, forbare true prieſts to teche God's law, and therefore the blind leadeth the blind, and both parts runnen into ſin, and full many to hell: and it is huge wonder that God of his righteouſneſs

neſs deſtroyeth not the houſes of prelates, and lords, and curates, as Sodom and Gomor for hereſie, extortions, and other curſedneſs. And for dread of this ſin, and many mo, ſome poor wretches receive no benefices in this world.

II. Yet tho poor prieſts mighten freely getten preſentation of lords to have benefices with cure of ſouls, they dreaden of miſpending poor mens goods. For prieſts owen to hold themſelves paide with food, and cloathing, as St. Paul techeth; and if they have more it is poor mens goods, as their own law, and God's law ſeyn, and they ben keepers thereof, and procurators of poor men. But for inſtitution and induction he ſhall give much of this good, that is poor men's, to biſhops officers, archdeacons, and officials, that ben too rich. And when biſhops and their officers comen, and feynen to viſit, tho they nouriſhen men in open ſin for annual rent, and don not their office, but ſellen ſouls to Sathanas for money, wretched curates ben neded to feaſten them richly, and give procuracy and ſynage, yea againſt God's law, and man's, and reaſon and their own conſcience, and yet

yet they ſhullen not be ſuffered to teche truly God's law to their own ſujects, and warn them of falſe prophets, who deceiven them both in belief and teching: for then they muſten crie to the people the great ſins of prelates; but they demen that ſuch ſad reproving of ſin is envy, ſlandering of prelates, and deſtroying of holy church. Alſo many times their patrons willen look to be feaſted of ſuch curates, elſe maken them leſe that little thing, that they and poor men ſhullen live by. So that they ſhullen not ſpend their tithes and offerings after good conſcience, and God's laws, but waſte them on rich and idle men. Alſo eche good day commonly theſe ſmall curates ſhullen have leters fro their ordinaries to ſummon, and to curſe poor men for nought, but for covetiſſe of antichriſts clerks; and if they not ſummonen and curſen them, tho they know no cauſe why, they ſhullen been hurted, and ſummoned fro day to day, fro far place to farther, or curſed, or leſe their benefits or profits. For elſe, as prelates feinen, they by their rebeldy ſhoulden ſoon deſtroy prelates juriſdiction, power, and winning. Alſo, when poor prieſts, firſt holy of life, and

and devout in their prayers, ben beneficed, if they ben not buſy about the world to make great feaſts to rich perſons and vicars, and coſtly and gayly arrayed, by falſe doom of the world, they ſhullen be hated and hayned on as hounds, and ech man redy to peire them in name, and worldly goods. So many curſed deceits hath antichriſt brought up by his worldly clerks to make curates to miſpende poor mens goods, and not truly do their office; or elſe to forſaken all, and let antichriſt's clerks, as lords of this world, rob the poor people by feyned cenſures, and teche the fend's lore both by open preaching and enſample of curſed life. Alſo, if ſuch curates ben ſtirred to learn God's law, and teach their pariſhens the goſpel, commonly they ſhullen get no leave of biſhops but for gold; and when they ſhullen moſt profit in their learning, then ſhullen they be clepid home at the prelate's will. And if they ſhullen have any high ſacraments, commonly they ſhulle buy them with poor mens goods; and ſo there is full great peril of evil ſpending of theſe goods, both upon prelates, rich men of the coun-

try, patrons, parſons, and their own kyn, for fame of the world, and for ſhame, and evil deeming of men. And certes it is great wonder that God ſuffereth ſo long this ſin unpuniſhed, namely of prelates courts, that ben dens of thieves, and larders of hell; and ſo of their officers, that ben ſotil in malice and covetiſſe; and of lords, and mighty men, that ſhulden deſtroy this wrong and other, and meyntenen truth, and God's ſervants, and now meyntenen antichriſt's falſneſs and his clerks, for part of the winning. But certes God ſuffreth ſuch hypocrites and tyrants to have name of prelates for great ſins of the people, that eche part lead other to hell by blindneſs of the fend. And this is a thouſand time more vengeance, than if God ſhud deſtroy bodily both parts, and all their goods, and earth therewith, as he did by Sodom and Gomor. For the longer that they liven thus in ſin, the greater pains ſhullen they have in hell, unleſs they amenden them.—And this dread, and many mo, maken ſome poor prieſts to receiven none benefices.

III. But

III. But yet tho poor prieſts mighten have freely preſentation of lords, and ben holpen by meyntening of kings, and help of good commons fro extortions of prelates, and other miſpending of theſe goods, that is full hard in this reigning of Antichriſt's clerks, yet they dreden ſore that by ſingular cure ordained of ſinful men they ſhulden be letted fro better occupation, and fro more profit of holy church. And this is the moſt dread of all; for they have cure and charge at the full of God to help their brethren to heavenward, both by teching, praying, and example-geving. And it ſeemeth that they ſhullen moſt eaſily fulfil this by general cure of charity, as did Chriſt and his apoſtles. And by this they moſt ſikerly ſave themſelves, and help their brethren: and they ben free to flee fro one city to another, when they ben purſued of antichriſt's clerks, as biddeth Chriſt in the goſpel. And they may beſt without challenging of men go and dwell among the people where they ſhullen moſt profit, and in covenable time, come and go after ſtirring of the holy ghoſt, and not be bounden by ſinful mens juriſdiction fro the better doing.

Alſo they purſuen Chriſt and his apoſtles nearer, in taking alms wilfully of the people that they techen, than in taking dymes and offerings by cuſtoms that ſinful men ordeynen, and uſen now in the time of grace. Alſo this is more medeful on both ſides as they underſtonden by Chriſts life, and his apoſtles: for thus the people giveth them alms more wilfully and devoutly, and they taken it more mekely, and ben more buſy to lerne, kepe and teche God's law, and ſo it is the better for both ſides. Alſo by this manner might and ſhulde the people geve freely their alms to true prieſts that truely kepen their order, and taughten the goſpel; and withdrawen fro wicked prieſts, and not to be conſtreyned to pay their tithes, and offrings to open curſed men to meyntene them in their open curſedneſs. And thus ſhould ſymony, covetiſſe, and idleneſs of worldly clerks be laid down: and holineſs, and true teching, and knowing of God's law be brought in: alſo thus ſhulde ſtriving, pleading, and curſing for dymes and offrings, and hate and diſcord among prieſts, and lewid men be ended; and unity, peace and charity

rity meyntened. Alſo theſe benefices, by this courſe, that men uſen now, bring in worldlineſs, and needleſs buſineſs about worldly offices, that Chriſt and his apoſtles wolden never taken upon them, and yet they weren more mighty, more witty, and more brenning in charity to God, and to the people, both to live the beſt manner in themſelves, and to teche other men. Alſo covetiſſe, and worldlineſs of the people ſhulden be done away; and Chriſts poverty, and his apoſtles, by enſample of poor life of clerks, and truſt in God, and deſiring of heavenly bliſs, ſhould regne in Chriſten people. Alſo then ſhulde prieſts ſtudy holy writt, and be devout in their prayers, and not be caried away with new offices, and mo ſacraments than Chriſt uſed, and his apoſtles, that taughten us all truth. Alſo mochil blaſphemy of prelates, and other men of feyned obedience, and nedleſs ſwearings made to worldly prelates ſhulden then ceſſen, and ſovereyn obedience to God and his law, and eſchewing of needleſs othes ſhulde regne among chriſten men. Alſo then ſhulde men eſchew commonly all the perils ſaid

before in the firſt chapter, and ſecond, and many thouſand mo, and live in clenneſs, and ſikerneſs of conſcience. Alſo then ſhulde prieſts be buſy to ſeke God's worſhip and ſaving of mens ſouls, and not their own worldly glory and winning of worldly dritt. Alſo then ſhulden prieſts live like to angels, as they ben angels of office, whereas they liven now as ſwine in fleſhly luſts, and turnen agen to their former ſins for abundance of worldly goods, and idleneſs in their ghoſtly office, and overmuch buſineſs about this wretched life.

For theſe dreads and many thouſand mo, and for to be mo like to Chriſt's life and his apoſtles, and for to profit mo to their own ſouls and other mens, ſome poor prieſts thinken with God to traveile about where they ſhulden moſt profiten, by evidence that God geveth them, while they have time, and little bodily ſtrength and youth. Nethleſs they damen not curates that done well their office, and dwellen where they ſhullen moſt profit, and techen truly and ſtably God's law agenſt falſe prophets, and curſed fends deceits.

Chriſt,

Chriſt, for his endleſs mercy, help his prieſts and common people to beware of Antichriſt's deceits, and go even the right way to heaven. Amen, Jeſu, for thy endleſs charity.

The END.

THE

p. 101

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THE

LIFE

OF

LORD COBHAM.

IT is a common obſervation, that the vulgar are generally the moſt open to conviction. The great are attached to eſtabliſhments, in which their intereſts are concerned: the learned to ſyſtems on which their time hath been ſpent. We need not wonder therefore, if we find few of any conſiderable eminence among the diſciples of Wicliff.

Among his own countrymen, Sir John Oldcaſtle, lord Cobham, is the moſt remarkable. We meet indeed with greater names; as Joan dowager of the Black-prince, and Ann, queen to Richard II. But theſe,

theſe, and ſome others, were rather his favourers, than profeſſed diſciples.

Sir John Oldcaſtle was born in the reign of Edward the third. He obtained his peerage by marrying the heireſs of that lord Cobham, who with ſo much virtue and patriotiſm oppoſed the tyranny of Richard the ſecond; with which nobleman he has been ſometimes confounded.

With the eſtate and title of his father in law, he ſeems alſo to have inherited his virtue and independent ſpirit. In the early part of his life we find him warmly diſtinguiſhing himſelf in the cauſe of religious liberty. The famous ſtatute againſt proviſors, which had been enacted in the late reign, was now become, during the languid government of Richard, a mere dead letter. The lord Cobham with great ſpirit undertook the revival of it; and through his perſuaſion it was confirmed by parliament, and guarded by ſeverer penalties.

The news of what the Engliſh parliament was doing in this buſineſs gave a great alarm at Rome; and Boniface the ninth, who was then pope, diſpatched a nuncio immediately to check their proceedings. This miniſter

at

at firſt cajoled; and afterwards threatned; but the ſpirit, which had been raiſed in the parliament, ſupported itſelf againſt both his artifices and his menaces.—This is the firſt inſtance we meet with of lord Cobham's avowed diſlike to the church of Rome.

Four years after he made a farther effort. A rebellion having diſcovered itſelf in Ireland, the king paſſed over with an army. He had made one campaign, and was preparing to take the field early in the ſpring of the year, 1395, when the archbiſhop of Canterbury arriving at his camp, intreated his immediate return into England, to put a ſtop to the ruin of the church. By the ruin of the church the good primate meant the reformation of the clergy; which had been attempted, during the king's abſence, by the lord Cobham, Sir Richard Story, Sir Thomas Latimer, and others of the reforming party. Theſe leaders having collected their ſtrength had drawn up a number of articles againſt the corruptions, which then prevailed among churchmen, and preſented them in the form of a remonſtrance, to the commons. As they had many friends in the houſe, and as their principal opponents were then

then abroad with the king, they thought it more than probable, that ſomething might be done by the parliament, in conſequence of their petition. But the zeal of the clergy prevailed; and the king who came inſtantly from Ireland, put an entire ſtop to the affair.

The partiality, which the lord Cobham thus diſcovered on all occaſions for the reformers, eaſily pointed him out to the clergy as the head of that party. Nor indeed made he any ſecret of his opinions. It was publicly known, that he had been at great expence in collecting and tranſcribing the works of Wicliff, which he had diſperſed among the common people without any reſerve. It was publicly known alſo, that he maintained a great number of the diſciples of Wicliff, as itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the dioceſſes of Canterbury, Rocheſter, London, and Hereford. Theſe things drew upon him the reſentment of the whole eccleſiaſtical order; and made him more obnoxious to that body of men, than any other perſon at that time in England.

Nine

Nine years had now elapſed, ſince Richard the ſecond had taken the government into his own hands. This entire interval he had conſumed in one ſteady incroachment (the only inſtance of ſteadineſs he gave) upon the laws of his country. So many indeed, and groſs were his indiſcretions, that it was commonly ſaid by the people, their king was under ſome preternatural infatuation. But as old Speed very well remarks (a remark too which might equally have fallen, where that cautious writer in matters of kingſhip would leaſt have choſen it) "when princes are wilful and ſlothful, and their favourites flatterers, there needs no other enchantment to infatuate, yea to ruinate the greateſt monarchs." After repeated ſtrokes upon the expiring liberties of the nation, a concluſive blow was ſtruck. The whole legiſlative power was intruſted, by the act of a venal parliament, to the king, ſix peers, and three commoners. An iron ſceptre being thus forged, was immediately ſhaken over the people. It were trifling to mention inſtances of private oppreſſion: towns and counties were ſeized at once. "For a while, ſays the judicious Rapin, reaſoning upon Richard's actions) five

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or ſix hundred perſons, who compoſe a parliament, and as many magiſtrates of towns and counties, may ſeem to an imprudent prince the body of a nation; but a time will come, when every ſingle perſon muſt be taken into the account."

That time was now come. The nation, exaſperated beyond ſufferance, caſt their eyes upon the duke of Lancaſter, who was now in exile. The archbiſhop of Canterbury, who ſhared the ſame fate, undertook to inform him of the deſigns of the malecontents in England. Henry, who had private, as well as public wrongs to revenge, put himſelf without delay at the head of the enterprize. His party ſoon became numerous, and was in general attended by the good wiſhes of the nation.

Lord Cobham had always ſhewn himſelf as much a friend to the civil, as the religious liberties of his country; and had followed the ſteps of his father in law in oppoſing the tyrannical encroachments of Richard; whoſe reſentment he had felt oftner than once. Convinced therefore of the feebleneſs and wickedneſs of thoſe hands, by which the ſceptre was ſwayed, he was among the firſt who

who attached themſelves to the fortunes of Henry, and was received by that prince with thoſe marks of favour, which a perſon of his conſequence might naturally expect.

When Henry the fourth came to the crown, it was imagined by all men, that in his heart he inclined to the opinions of the reformers. But Henry was a prudent prince; and maxims of policy were ever the rules of his conſcience. He found, upon examining the ſtate of parties in England, that the eccleſiaſtical intereſt was the moſt able to ſupport his pretenſions; and without farther heſitation attached himſelf to it. The clergy were high in their demands. Their friendſhip was not to be purchaſed but at the price of blood. Lollardy ſpread apace. The laws in being were unable to check its progreſs: and the king was given to underſtand, that his protection would ſecure their loyalty. In ſhort, they muſt be made eaſy by a law to burn heretics.

The king diſcovered no great reluctance: but the commons, among whom, many thought favourably of Wicliff, were very averſe from theſe ſanguinary proceedings. At length however an act paſſed, impower-

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ing the clergy to the extent of their desires: yet it passed not but with the utmost stretch of the king's authority. By this act the civil power was obliged to assist in the execution of ecclesiastical sentences. Mr. Fox indeed tells us, that he cannot find, it ever did pass the commons; but supposes, that as parliamentary affairs were then managed with little regularity, it was huddled in among other acts, and signed by the king without further notice.

That wicked and ambitious men should wade through blood to support either civil or ecclesiastical tyranny, is too common a sight to be matter of surprize. But that any set of men should so far pervert their notions of right and wrong, as calmly to believe, that a few erroneous opinions could make a man in the highest degree criminal, however excellent his life might be, is a thing altogether amazing. And yet charity obligeth us to believe that many of the popish persecutors of those times were thus persuaded. "The disciples of Wicliff, says Reihner, a popish writer) are men of a serious, modest deportment avoiding all ostentation in dress, mixing little with the busy world, and complaining of

of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themſelves wholly by their own labour, and utterly deſpiſe wealth: being fully content with bare neceſſaries. They are chaſte, and temperate; are never ſeen in taverns, or amuſed by the trifling gaities of life. Yet you find them always employed, either learning, or teaching. They are conciſe, and devout in their prayers, blaming an unanimated prolixity. They never ſwear; ſpeak little; and in their public preaching lay the chief ſtreſs on charity." All theſe things this writer mentions, with great ſimplicity, not as the marks of a virtuous conduct, but as the ſigns of hereſy.—A ſtriking inſtance this, among many others that might be produced from thoſe times, of the little regard paid to morals, in compariſon of opinions and outward obſervances.

Notwithſtanding the determination of Henry, at any rate, to keep the clergy in good humour, he does not ſeem to have diſcovered the leaſt change towards lord Cobham, who was indeed one of the principal ornaments of his court. On the contrary, in the year 1407, he gave him a public teſtimony of his regard.

France was at this time a ſcene of great diſorder, through the competition of the Orlean and Burgundian factions. Henry remembring that the French had more than once inſulted him, while he was in no condition to oppoſe them, reſolved, in the ſpirit of retaliation, to avail himſelf of theſe troubles by aſſiſting one of the contending parties. After balancing ſome time, he thought it beſt to join the duke of Burgundy. He raiſed an army therefore with all ſpeed, and giving the command of it to the earl of Arundel, and lord Cobham, tranſported it into France. Lord Cobham, it ſeems was not ſo thorough a diſciple of Wicliff, as to imbibe his opinions without reſerve. He had been bred to the profeſſion of arms, and could not entirely reconcile himſelf to the peaceable tenets of his maſter. Perhaps, like other caſuiſts, he indulged a favourite point, and found arguments to make that indulgence lawful.

The Engliſh army found the duke of Orleans beſieging Paris, which was attached to the Burgundian intereſt. The relief therefore of this city the Burgundian had greatly at heart. He communicated his views to the

the Engliſh generals, who readily came into them. A bold puſh was accordingly made: the enemy's lines were pierced; and the duke entered Paris at the head of his victorious army. This gallant action, in which the Engliſh had a principal ſhare, put an end to the conteſt for this time. Orleans drew off his men; and waited for a more favourable opportunity of renewing the war.

Henry the fourth died in the year 1413; in whom the clergy loſt all their hopes. His ſucceſſor was a diſſolute prince, careleſs even of appearances—without queſtion therefore unconcerned about religion. Had heaven granted a few years more to his father's life, the church had been eſtabliſhed on a ſolid baſis. But now all was at an end.—Such were the fears and deſponding murmurs of the clergy. But their hopes immediately revived. Henry the fifth was a perſon wholly different from the prince of Wales. He diſmiſſed the companions of his looſer hours; and with them his debauchery. No ſentiments, but what were noble, great, and generous had any ſway with him. And what

is very remarkable, among his virtues, piety was conſpicuous. This the clergy preſently obſerved; and reſolved to turn it to their own advantage.

Thomas Arundel was, at this time, archbiſhop of Canterbury; and preſided over the church of England with as much zeal, and bigotry, as any of his predeceſſors. By his councils the convocation, which aſſembled in the firſt year of the new king, were directed. The growth of hereſy was the ſubject of their debate, and the deſtruction of the lord Cobham the chief object which the archbiſhop had in view. It was an undertaking however, which required caution. The lord Cobham was a perſon in favour with the people; and, what was more, in favour with his prince. At preſent therefore the primate ſatisfied himſelf with ſounding the king's ſentiments, by requeſting an order from his majeſty to ſend commiſſioners to enquire into the growth of hereſy at Oxford. To this requeſt the king made no objection.

Oxford was the ſeat of hereſy. Here the memory of Wicliff was ſtill gratefully preſerved. His learning, his eloquence, his labours,

bours, and noble fortitude were yet the objects of admiration. His tenets had ſpread widely among the junior ſtudents, whoſe ingenuity rendered them more open to conviction. Nor indeed was it an uncommon thing to hear his opinions publicly maintained even in the ſchools. The governing part of the univerſity were however ſtill firmly attached to the eſtabliſhed religion.

The commiſſioners were reſpectfully received; and having made their enquiry, returned with the particulars of it to the archbiſhop, who laid them before the convocation. Long debates enſued. The reſult was, that the increaſe of hereſy was particularly owing to the influence of the lord Cobham, who not only avowedly held heretical opinions himſelf; but encouraged ſcholars from Oxford, and other places, by bountiful ſtipends, to propagate thoſe opinions in the country. In the end, it was determined, that without delay a proſecution ſhould be commenced againſt him.

Into this haſty meaſure the convocation had certainly run, had not a cool head among them ſuggeſted, that as the lord Cobham was

not only a favourite, but even a domeſtic at court, it would be highly improper to proceed farther in this buſineſs, till application had been made to the king. This advice prevailed; the archbiſhop, at the head of a large proceſſion of dignified eccleſiaſtics, waited upon Henry; and with as much acrimony as decency would admit, laid before him the offence of his ſervant the lord Cobham, and begged his majeſty would ſuffer them for Chriſt's ſake to put him to death.

Some hiſtorians have charged Henry with cruelty. In this inſtance at leaſt he ſhewed lenity. He told the archbiſhop, he had ever been averſe from ſhedding blood in the cauſe of religion. Such violence he thought more deſtructive of truth than error. He enjoined the convocation therefore, to poſtpone the affair a few days; in which time he would himſelf reaſon with the lord Cobham, whoſe behaviour he by no means approved; and if this were ineffectual, he would then leave him to the cenſure of the church.

With this anſwer the primate was ſatisfied; and the king ſending for the lord Cobham, endeavoured by all the arguments in his power,

power, to ſet before him the high offence of ſeparating from the church; and pathetically exhorted him to retract his errors. Lord Cobham's anſwer is upon record. "I ever was, (ſaid he,) a dutiful ſubject to your majeſty, and I hope ever will be. Next to God, I profeſs obedience to my king. But as for the ſpiritual dominion of the pope, I never could ſee on what foundation it is claimed, nor can I pay him any obedience. As ſure as God's word is true, to me it is fully evident, that he is the great antichriſt foretold in holy writ."

This anſwer of the lord Cobham ſo exceedingly ſhocked the king, that turning away in viſible diſpleaſure, he withdrew from that time, every mark of favour from him.

The archbiſhop, thus triumphant, immediately cited the lord Cobham to appear before him on a fixed day: but that high-ſpirited nobleman, expreſſing great contempt for the archbiſhop's citation, would not even ſuffer his ſummoner (as he is called) to enter his gate. Upon this the archbiſhop fixed the citation upon the doors of the cathedral of Rocheſter, which was only three miles from

Cowling-caſtle, the lord Cobham's ſeat; but it was immediately torn away by unknown hands.

The day appointed for his appearance was the eleventh of ſeptember, on which day the primate, and his aſſociates, ſat in conſiſtory. The accuſed party not appearing, the archbiſhop pronounced him contumacious; and after receiving a very exaggerated charge againſt him, which he did not examine, he excommunicated him without further ceremony. Having proceeded thus far, he armed himſelf with the terrors of the new law, and threatning direful anathemas, called in the civil power to aſſiſt him.

Now firſt the lord Cobham thought himſelf in danger. He ſaw the ſtorm approaching in all its horrors; and in vain looked round for ſhelter. Aided as the clergy were by the civil power, he knew it would be ſcarce poſſible to ward off the meditated blow. Still however he had hope that the king's favour was not wholly alienated from him. At leaſt he thought it of importance to make the trial. He put in writing therefore a confeſſion of his faith; and with this in his hand, waited upon the king; begging his

his majeſty to be the judge himſelf, whether he had deſerved the rough treatment he had found.

In this confeſſion he firſt recites the apoſtles creed; then, by way of explanation, he profeſſes his belief in the trinity, and acknowledges Chriſt as the only head of the church, which he divides into the bleſſed in heaven, thoſe who are tormented in purgatory, (if, ſays he, there is foundation in ſcripture for any ſuch place) and the righteous on earth. He then profeſſes to believe, that in the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper are contained Chriſt's body and blood under the ſimilitude of bread and wine. "Finally, (ſays he,) my faith is, that God will aſk no more of a Chriſtian in this life, than to obey the precepts of his bleſſed law. If any prelate of the church requireth more, or any other kind of obedience, he contemneth Chriſt, exalteth himſelf above God, and becometh plainly antichriſt."

This confeſſion the lord Cobham offered to the king in the manner as hath been mentioned. The king coldly ordered it to be given to the archbiſhop. Lord Cobham then offered to bring an hundred knights, who would

would bear teſtimony to the innocence of his life, and opinions. The king being ſilent, he aſſumed a higher ſtrain, and begged his majeſty would permit him, as was uſual in leſs matters, to vindicate his innocence by the law of arms. The king continued ſilent.

At this inſtant a perſon entered the chamber, and in the king's preſence cited lord Cobham to appear before the archbiſhop. It is probable this was a concerted buſineſs. Startled at the ſuddenneſs of the thing, the lord Cobham made his laſt effort. "Since I can have no other juſtice (ſaid he) I appeal to the pope at Rome." The king firing at this, cried out with vehemence, "Thou ſhalt never proſecute thy appeal:" and lord Cobham refuſing to ſubmit implicitly to the cenſure of the church, was immediately hurried to the tower by the king's expreſs order.

There is ſomething uncommonly ſtrange in the account here given us of lord Cobham's appeal to the pope, whoſe ſupremacy he had ever denyed. No conſiſtent reaſon can be aſſigned for it. As to the fact how-

ever

ever we have only its improbability to alledge againſt it.

On the the twenty third of ſeptember the primate ſate in the chapter-houſe of Paul's, aſſiſted by the biſhops of London and Winchelter, when lord Cobham was brought before him by Sir Robert Morley, lieutenant of the tower.

The archbiſhop firſt broke ſilence. "Sir, (ſaid he) it was ſufficiently proved in a late ſeſſion of convocation, that you held many heretical opinions; upon which, agreeable to our forms, you were cited to appear before us; and refuſing, you have been for contumacy, excommunicated. Had you made proper ſubmiſſions, I was then ready to have abſolved you, and am now."

Lord Cobham, taking no notice of the offer of abſolution, only ſaid in anſwer, that if his lordſhip would give him leave, he would juſt read his opinion on thoſe articles, about which he ſuppoſed he was called in queſtion; that any farther examination on thoſe points was needleſs, for he was entirely fixed, and ſhould not be found to waver.

Leave

Leave being given, he read a paper, which contained his opinion on four points, the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, penance, images, and pilgrimages.

With regard to the firſt point, he held, as hath been already mentioned, that Chriſt's body was really contained under the form of bread.—With regard to the ſecond, he thought penance for ſin, as a ſign of contrition, was uſeful and proper.—With regard to images, he thought them only allowable to remind men of heavenly things; and that he who really paid divine worſhip to them, was an idolater.—With regard to the laſt point, he ſaid that all men were pilgrims upon earth towards happineſs or miſery; but that as to pilgrimages undertaken to the ſhrines of ſaints, they were frivolous, he thought, and ridiculous.

Having read this paper, he delivered it to the archbiſhop; who having examined it, told him, that what it contained was in part truly orthodox; but that in ſome parts he was not ſufficiently explicit. There were other points, the primate ſaid, on which it was expected he ſhould give his opinion.

Lord

Lord Cobham refuſed to make any other anſwer; telling the archbiſhop, he was fixed in his opinions. "You ſee me, (added he,) in your hands; and may do with me what you pleaſe."

This reſolution, in which he perſiſted, diſconcerted the biſhops. After a conſultation among themſelves, the primate told him, that on all theſe points holy church had determined; by which determination all Chriſtians ought to abide. He added, that for the preſent he would diſmiſs him, but ſhould expect a more explicit anſwer on the monday following; and that in the mean time he would ſend him, as a direction to his faith, the determination of the church upon thoſe points, on which his opinion would be particularly required.

The next day he ſent the following paper; which as it will ſhew the groſſneſs of ſome of the opinions of the church at that time, the reader ſhall have in its own language.

The determination of the archbiſhop, and the clergy.

"The faith and determination of the holy church touching the bliſsful ſacrament of the

the altar, is this, that after the ſacramental words be once ſpoken, the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Chriſt's very body: and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Chriſt's very blood. And ſo there remaineth from thenceforth no material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the ſacramental words were ſpoken.—Holy church hath determined, that every Chriſtian man ought to be ſhriven to a prieſt, ordained by the church, if he may come to him.—Chriſt ordained St. Peter the apoſtle, to be his vicar here on earth, whoſe ſee is the holy church of Rome; and he granted, that the ſame power, which he gave unto Peter, ſhould ſucceed to all Peter's ſucceſſors, which we call now popes of Rome; by whoſe power he ordained, in particular churches, archbiſhops, biſhops, parſons, curates, and other degrees; whom Chriſtian men ought to obey after the laws of the church of Rome. This is the determination of holy church.—Holy church hath determined, that it is meritorious to a Chriſtian man to go on a pilgrimage to holy places; and there to worſhip holy reliques, and images of ſaints,

ſaints, apoſtles, martyrs, and confeſſors, approved by the church of Rome."

On the day appointed the archbiſhop appeared in court, attended by three biſhops, and four heads of religious houſes. As if he had been apprehenſive of tumult, he removed his judicial chair from the cathedral of Paul's, to a more private place in a dominican convent; and had the area crouded with a numerous throng of friars and monks, as well as ſeculars.

Amidſt the contemptuous looks of theſe fiery zealots, lord Cobham, attended by the lieutenant of the tower, walked up undaunted to the place of hearing.

With an appearance of great mildneſs the archbiſhop accoſted him; and having curſorily run over what had hitherto paſſed in the proceſs, told him, he expected, at their laſt meeting, to have found him ſuing for abſolution; but that the door of reconciliation was ſtill open, if reflexion had yet brought him to himſelf.

"I have treſpaſſed againſt you in nothing, ſaid the high-ſpirited nobleman: I have no need of your abſolution."

Then

Then kneeling down, and lifting up his hands to heaven, he broke out into this pathetic exclamation.

"I confeſs myſelf here before thee, O almighty God, to have been a grievous ſinner. How often have ungoverned paſſions miſled my youth! How often have I been drawn into ſin by the temptations of the world.—Here abſolution is wanted.—O my God, I humbly aſk thy mercy."

Then riſing up, with tears in his eyes, and ſtrongly affected with what he had juſt uttered, he turned to the aſſembly, and ſtretching out his arm, cryed out with a loud voice: "Lo! theſe are your guides, good people. For the moſt flagrant tranſgreſſions of God's moral law was I never once called in queſtion by them. I have expreſſed ſome diſlike to their arbitrary appointments and traditions, and I am treated with unparallel'd ſeverity. But let them remember the denunciations of Chriſt againſt the Phariſees: all ſhall be fulfilled."

The grandeur and dignity of his manner, and the vehemence with which he ſpoke, threw the court into ſome confuſion. The archbiſhop however attempted an aukward apology

apology for his treatment of him: and then turning ſuddenly to him, aſked what he thought of the paper, that had been ſent to him the day before? and particularly, what he thought of the firſt article, with regard to the holy ſacrament?

"With regard to the holy ſacrament, (anſwered lord Cobham,) my faith is, that Chriſt ſitting with his diſciples, the night before he ſuffered, took bread; and bleſſing it, brake it, and give it to them, ſaying, Take, eat, this is my body, which was given for you: do this in remembrance of me.—This is my faith, ſir, with regard to the holy ſacrament. I am taught this faith by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul."

The archbiſhop then aſked him, "Whether, after the words of conſecration, he believed there remained any *material* bread?

"The ſcriptures, ſaid he, make no mention of the word *material*. I believe, as was expreſſed in the paper I gave in, that, after conſecration, Chriſt's body remains in the *form* of bread."

Upon this a loud murmur aroſe in the aſſembly; and the words "Hereſy, hereſy," were heard from every part. One of the

biſhops eſpecially crying out with more than ordinary vehemence. "That it was a foul hereſy to call it bread; lord Cobham, who ſtood near, interrupting him, ſaid, St. Paul, the apoſtle, was as wiſe a man as you are, and perhaps as good a Chriſtian; and yet he, after the words of conſecration, plainly calls it *bread*. The *bread*, ſaith he, that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt? St. Paul, he was anſwered, muſt be otherwiſe underſtood; for it was ſurely hereſy to ſay ſo."—Lord Cobham aſked, "How that appeared?—"Why, ſaid the other, it is againſt the determination of holy church."—"You know, ſir, interrupted the archbiſhop, we ſent you the true faith on this point, clearly determined by the church and holy doctors."—"I know none holier, replied lord Cobham, than Chriſt and his apoſtles; and this determination is ſurely none of theirs. It is plainly againſt ſcripture."—Do you not then believe in the determination of the church?—"I do not. I believe the ſcriptures; and all that is founded upon them: but in your idle determinations I have no belief. To be ſhort with you, I cannot conſider the church of Rome

Rome as any part of the Chriſtian church. Its endeavour is to oppoſe the purity of the goſpel, and to ſet up in its room, I know not what abſurd conſtitutions of its own."

This free declaration threw the whole aſſembly into great diſorder. Every one exclaimed againſt the audacious heretic. Among others, the prior of the Carmelites, lifting up his eyes to heaven, cried out, "What deſperate wretches are theſe ſcholars of Wicliff."

"Before God and man, (anſwered lord Cobham, with vehemence,) I here profeſs, that before I knew Wicliff, I never abſtained from ſin; but after I was acquainted with that virtuous man, I ſaw my errors, and I hope reformed them."

"It were an hard thing, replied the prior, if in an age ſo liberally ſupplied with pious and learned men, I ſhould not be able to amend my life, till I heard the devil preach."

"Go on, go on, (anſwered lord Cobham with ſome warmth;) follow the ſteps of your fathers, the old Phariſees. Aſcribe, like them, every thing good to the devil, that oppoſes your own iniquities. Pronounce them heretics, who rebuke your crimes:

and if you cannot prove them ſuch by ſcripture, call in the fathers.—Am I too ſevere? Let your own actions ſpeak. What warrant have you from ſcripture for this very act you are now about? Where do you find it written in all God's law, that you may thus ſit in judgment upon the life of man?—Hold—Annas and Caiphas may perhaps be quoted in your favour.

"Ay, (ſaid one of the doctors,) and Chriſt too, for he judged Judas."

"I never heard that he did, (ſaid lord Cobham.) He pronounced indeed a woe againſt him, as he doth ſtill againſt you, who have followed Judas's ſteps: for ſince his venom hath been ſhed in the church, you have vilely betrayed the cauſe of real chriſtianity."

The archbiſhop deſired him to explain what he meant by venom?

"I mean by it, (ſaid lord Cobham,) the wealth of the church. When the church was firſt endowed, (as an author of your own pathetically expreſſes it) an angel in the air, cryed out, woe, woe, woe: This day is venom ſhed into the church of God. Since that time, inſtead of laying down their

their lives for religion, as was common in the early ages, the biſhops of Rome have been engaged in a conſtant ſcene of perſecution, or in curſing, murdering, poiſoning, or fighting with each other.—Where is now the meekneſs of Chriſt, his tenderneſs, and indulging gentleneſs? not in Rome certainly."

Then raiſing his voice, he cried out, Thus ſaith Chriſt in his goſpel, woe unto you ſcribes, and phariſees, hypocrites, you ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men: you neither enter in yourſelves, neither will you ſuffer thoſe to enter, who otherwiſe would. You ſtop the way by your traditions: you hinder God's true miniſters from ſetting the truth before the people. But let the prieſt be ever ſo wicked, if he defend your tyranny, he is ſuffered."

Then looking ſtedfaſtly upon the archbiſhop, after a ſhort pauſe, he ſaid, "Both Daniel and Chriſt have propheſied, that troubleſome times ſhould come, ſuch as had not been from the foundation of the world. —This propheſy ſeems in a great meaſure fulfilled in the preſent ſtate of the church.—you have greatly troubled the people of God:

you have already dipped your hands in blood; and, if I foreſee aright, will ſtill farther embrue them. But there is a threat on record againſt you: therefore look to it: your days ſhall be ſhortened.—For the elects ſake your days ſhall be ſhortened."

The very great ſpirit, and reſolution with which lord Cobham behaved on this occaſion, together with the quickneſs and pertinence of his anſwers, Mr. Fox tells us, ſo amazed his adverſaries, that they had nothing to reply. The archbiſhop was ſilent. The whole court was at a ſtand.

At laſt one of the doctors, taking a copy of the paper which had been ſent to the tower, and turning to lord Cobham, told him, That the deſign of their preſent meeting was not to ſpend the time in idle altercation; but to come to ſome concluſion. "We only, (ſaid he,) deſire to know your opinion upon the points contained in this paper." He then deſired a direct anſwer, whether, after the words of conſecration, there remained any material bread?

"I have told you, (anſwered lord Cobham) that my belief is, that Chriſt's body is contained under the *form* of bread."

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He was again aſked, whether he thought confeſſion to a prieſt of abſolute neceſſity?

He ſaid, he thought it might be in many caſes uſeful to aſk the opinion of a prieſt, if he were a learned and pious man; but he thought it by no means neceſſary to ſalvation.

He was then queſtioned about the pope's right to St. Peter's chair.

He that followeth Peter the nigheſt in good living, (he anſwered,) is next him in ſucceſſion. You talk, ſaid he, of Peter; but I ſee none of you that followeth his lowly manners; nor indeed the manners of his ſucceſſors, till the time of Sylveſter."

"But what do you affirm of the pope?"

"That he and you together, replied lord Cobham,) make whole the great antichriſt. He is the head, you biſhops and prieſts are the body, and the begging friers are the tail, that covers the filthineſs of you both with lies and ſophiſtry."

He was laſtly aſked, what he thought of the worſhip of images and holy relicts?

"I pay them, (anſwered lord Cobham,) no manner of regard.—Is it not, ſaid he, a wonderful thing, that theſe ſaints, ſo diſinte-

reſted upon earth, ſhould after death become ſuddenly ſo covetous?—It would indeed be wonderful did not the pleaſurable lives of prieſts account for it."

Having thus anſwered the four articles, the archbiſhop told him, that he found lenity was indulged to no purpoſe. "The day, (ſays he) is wearing apace: we muſt come to ſome concluſion. Take your choice of this alternative; ſubmit obediently to the orders of the church, or endure the conſequence."

"My faith is fixed, (anſwered lord Cobham aloud) do with me what you pleaſe."

The archbiſhop then ſtanding up, and taking off his cap, pronounced aloud the cenſure of the church.

Lord Cobham, with great chearfulneſs, ſubjoined, "You may condemn my body: my ſoul, I am well aſſured, you cannot hurt."—Then turning to the people, and ſtretching out his hands, he cryed out with a loud voice, "Good Chriſtian people, for God's ſake be well aware of theſe men; they will otherwiſe beguile you, and lead you to deſtruction." Having ſaid this, he fell

fell on his knees, and, raiſing his hands, and eyes, begged God to forgive his enemies.

He was then delivered to Sir Robert Morley, and ſent back to the tower.

Theſe proceedings of the clergy were very unpopular. Few men were generally more eſteemed than lord Cobham. His great virtues would have gained him reſpect, had his opinions been diſreputable. But the tenets of Wicliff had, at this time, many advocates. The clergy therefore were in ſome degree perplexed. They ſaw the bad conſequences of going farther, but ſaw worſe in receding. What ſeemed beſt, and was indeed moſt agreeable to the genius of popery, was, to endeavour to leſſen his credit among the people. With this view many ſcandalous aſperſions were ſpread abroad by their emiſſaries. Mr. Fox tells us, they ſcrupled not even to publiſh a recantation in his name; and gives us a copy of it. Lord Cobham, in his own defence, had the following paper poſted up in ſome of the moſt public places in London.

"Foraſmuch as ſir John Oldcaſtle, lord Cobham, is untruly convicted, and impriſoned, falſely reported of, and ſlandered among

among the common people by his adverſaries, that he ſhould otherwiſe ſpeak of the ſacraments of the church, and eſpecially of the bleſſed ſacrament of the altar, than was written in the confeſſion of his belief; known be it here to all the world, that he hath never ſince varied in any point therefrom, but this is plainly his belief, that all the ſacraments of the church be profitable, and expedient alſo to all, taking them after the intent that Chriſt and his true church hath ordained. Furthermore he believeth, that the bleſſed ſacrament of the altar, is verily and truly Chriſt's body in the form of bread."

Some months had now elapſed, ſince lord Cobham had been condemned: nor did the primate and his clergy ſeem to have come to any reſolution. They thought it imprudent yet to proceed to extremities.

Out of this perplexity, their priſoner himſelf extricated them. By unknown means he eſcaped out of the tower, and taking the advantage of a dark night, evaded purſuit, and

and arrived ſafe in Wales; where, under the protection of ſome of the chiefs of the country, he ſecured himſelf againſt the attempts of his enemies.

This, it may eaſily be imagined, was a ſenſible mortification to the clergy; and great pains were taken to perſuade the king to iſſue a proclamation againſt him. But the king, who probably thought, that enough had been done already, paid little attention to what was urged; and ſhewed no inclination to afford his countenance in apprehending him.

This was ſtill a greater mortification. They remembered the wicked attempts made againſt them by the commons in the laſt reign; and dreaded the revival of them. The leaſt coolneſs in the king, they knew, would be a ſignal to their enemies: and it was the part of prudence, to ſpare no pains in alienating him from the lollards.

Jealouſy, the natural companion of uſurped power, was the ruling foible of the houſe of Lancaſter. This the clergy had obſerved; and thought they could not do better than to repreſent the Lollards as ill-inclined to the government. The king lent an ear to their whiſpers,

whiſpers, and began to eye theſe unfortunate men with that caution, with which he guarded againſt his greateſt enemies.

Among other inſtances of the zeal of the clergy in propagating calumny, the following ſtory, attended by very extraordinary circumſtances, is related.

The biſhops had lately obtained a proclamation, forbidding the Lollards to aſſemble in companies; which they had commonly done for the ſake of devotion. The proclamation had in part only its effect: they ſtill continued to aſſemble: but in leſs companies, more privately, and often in the dead of night. St. Giles's fields, then a thicket, was a place of frequent reſort on theſe occaſions. Here about an hundred of them had met one evening, with an intention, as was uſual, to continue their meeting to a very late hour. Emiſſaries, mixing with them under the diſguiſe of friends, ſoon gave intelligence of their deſign.

The king was then at Eltham, a few miles from London. As he was ſitting down to ſupper, advice was brought him, that the lord Cobham, at the head of 20,000 men, had taken poſt in St. Giles's fields, breath-

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ing revenge, and threatening to murder the king, the princes of the blood, and all the lords, ſpiritual and temporal, who ſhould oppoſe him.

The king, not conſidering how improbable it was, that ſuch an army could have been gotten together without earlier notice; and having few about him to adviſe with, conſulted only the gallantry of his own temper, and took a ſudden reſolution to arm what men he could readily muſter, and ſurprize the rebels before they had concerted their ſchemes. Soon after midnight he arrived upon the place, and fell with great ſpirit upon what he ſuppoſed the advanced guard of the enemy. They were ſoon thrown into confuſion, and yielded an eaſy victory. About twenty were killed, and ſixty taken; the chief leader of whom was one Beverly, a preacher. Fluſhed with this ſucceſs, the king marched on towards the main body. But no main body was found; and this formidable army was diſperſed as eaſily as it had been raiſed.

This ſtrange affair, we may imagine, is differently related by different party writers. The popiſh hiſtorians talk of it, as of a real conſpiracy;

conſpiracy; and exclaim loudly againſt tenets, which could encourage ſuch crimes. Among theſe the ingenious Mr. Hume has choſen to liſt himſelf; and on no better authority than Walſingham, a mere bigot, hath without any heſitation charged lord Cobham with high-treaſon.

On the other hand, the proteſtant writers, in general, treat the whole as a fiction, and cenſure their adverſaries with great acrimony for ſo malicious an aſperſion.

The papiſts, put to proof, alledge, that arms were found upon the field; and that many of the priſoners made open confeſſion of the wickedneſs of their intentions.

As to arms, reply the proteſtants, it is a ſtale trick to hide them on purpoſe to ſerve an occaſion by finding them: and as to confeſſions, nothing is more common, than to extort them from innocent perſons. Beſides, they might have been drawn from popiſh emiſſaries, mixing among the Wiclivites, with the very intention of being brought to confeſſion. "In truth, (ſays the judicious Rapin, reaſoning upon this fact) it is hardly to be conceived, that a prince ſo wiſe as Henry, could ſuffer himſelf to be impoſed upon

upon by ſo groſs a fiction. Had he found indeed, as he was made to believe, 20,000 men in arms in St. Giles's fields, it might have created ſuſpicion; but that fourſcore, or an hundred men, among whom there was not a ſingle perſon of rank, ſhould have formed ſuch a project, is extremely improbable. Beſides, he himſelf knew ſir John Oldcaſtle to be a man of ſenſe; and yet nothing could be more wild than the project fathered upon him; a project, which it was ſuppoſed he was to execute with a handful of men, and yet he himſelf abſent, and no leader in his room. Beſides, notwithſtanding the ſtricteſt ſearch made through the kingdom, to diſcover the accomplices of this pretended conſpiracy, not a ſingle perſon could be found, beſides thoſe taken at St. Giles's. Laſtly, the principles of the Lollards were very far from allowing ſuch barbarities. It is therefore more than probable, that the accuſation was forged to render the Lollards odious to the king, with a view to obtain his licence for their proſecution."

It would be tedious to ſay all that might be ſaid in defence of Lord Cobham on this occaſion.

occaſion. Mr. Fox, in the firſt volume of his acts and monuments, hath given us a very laboured, and ſatisfactory vindication of him. He examines firſt the ſtatutes and authentic records, and afterwards the earlieſt hiſtorians, from all which he draws a very concluſive argument, that there was no conſpiracy intended. The title of Mr. Fox's tract is, *A defence of lord Cobham againſt Alanus Copus.*

As improbable however as this conſpiracy was, it was, for a time at leaſt, entirely credited by the king, and fully anſwered the deſigns of the clergy. It thoroughly incenſed Henry againſt the Lollards; and gave a very ſevere check to the whole party. As for lord Cobham himſelf, the king was ſo perſuaded of his guilt, that through his influence, a bill of attainder againſt him paſſed the commons, as appears from an old parliamentary record, preſerved in the Britiſh Muſeum. And not ſatisfied with this, Henry ſet a price of a thouſand marks upon his head; and promiſed a perpetual exemption from taxes to any town, that ſhould ſecure him.—This affair happened in the year 1414.

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In a few months after, a parliament was called at Leiceſter. Hither the zeal of the clergy followed the king. In purſuance of their old ſcheme of rendering the Lollards ſuſpected as enemies to the ſtate, they had a bill brought in, by which hereſy ſhould incur the forfeitures of treaſon. This bill likewiſe made thoſe liable to the ſame penalties, who had broken priſon, after having been convicted of hereſy, unleſs they rendered themſelves again. This clauſe was too evidently aimed at the lord Cobham, to need a comment.

To this bill the clergy foreſaw a furious oppoſition from the Lollards, who bore no inconſiderable ſway in the houſe. Great therefore was their ſurpriſe, when they found their bill paſſed without any obſtacle. Their pulpits rang with the praiſes of the parliament; and they congratulated each other upon the glorious proſpect of the church, when every branch of the legiſlature united in their endeavours to extirpate hereſy.—But the clergy were much deceived in their opinion of the commons, who acted in this buſineſs with great addreſs.

It had long been the favourite ſcheme of a majority in the houſe, to ſtrip the clergy of their poſſeſſions; and in this majority many were found, who were by no means inclined to the opinions of Wicliff. Theſe men were too much patriots to wiſh their country enſlaved by an oppreſſive hierarchy; and ſaw no way of eſcaping ſuch bondage, but by wringing from the church that wealth, which was the ſource of its power. Friends to its ſpiritual juriſdiction, they cavilled only at its temporal.

Full of theſe ſentiments, the commons, though twice foiled in the late reign, were not diſcouraged. Their diſappointment put them only upon a change of meaſures. The zeal which the reformers had ſhewn in parliament againſt the unbounded wealth of religious houſes, had heretofore furniſhed the clergy with a pretence for clamouring, "That all was virulence againſt the church." To this clamour the late king paid great regard. The leading members therefore of this parliament reſolved firſt to exculpate themſelves of the charge of hereſy; and having done this, they imagined they might, with much greater facility, put their deſigns

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in execution: and on this principle they gave way to the clergy in their late act.

Their intention was not long a myſtery. In the midſt of the praiſes beſtowed upon them; while the clergy were every where extolling them as the wiſeſt, and moſt reſpectable body of men that ever met together, how were they thunderſtruck, when they heard that theſe wiſe and reſpectable men, had almoſt unanimouſly preſented a petition to the king to ſeize the revenues of the clergy? This was an unexpected blow. Something however was to be done, and that inſtantly. The king had diſcovered no marks of diſpleaſure at the petition; which was a dreadful omen.

It was matter of joy to all good catholics, that Henry Chicheley was now archbiſhop of Canterbury. This prelate had ſucceeded Arundel; and to the zeal of his predeceſſor, added a more artful addreſs in the management of affairs. Such addreſs was the principal thing, at that time, required in an archbiſhop of Canterbury.

Undaunted at the ſtorm, this able pilot ſtepped to the helm; and judging it adviſeable to give up a part rather than hazard the

whole, he went to the king; and with all humility hoped, "His majeſty did not mean ſo raſh a thing, as to put it out of the power of his old friends to ſerve him as they had ever done: the clergy were his ſure refuge upon all occaſions; and as a proof of their zeal, they begged his majeſty would accept at their hands, a ſurrender of all the alien priories; which being not fewer than an hundred and ten, would very conſiderably augment his revenues." Henry pauſed,—and conſidering the noble ſacrifice they had offered, and reflecting upon the old maxim of prudence, that a ſecurity, though of leſs value, is better than a contingence;—and withal, dreading the conſequences of irritating ſo powerful a body, he accepted their offer; and the clergy had once more the pleaſure to ſee their arts counterbalance the deſigns of their enemies.

The archbiſhop, however, not yet ſufficiently ſecure, proceeded a ſtep farther. He obſerved, from the times, a general inclination to a French war, and wanted thoroughly to embark his ſovereign in ſuch an enterprize; rightly judging, that ſchemes abroad would divert him from ſchemes at home; and that

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a war upon the continent would greatly induce him to leave all quiet in his own dominions.

Thus reſolved, he took an early opportunity to addreſs the king in full parliament. In a ſtudied harangue he proved the claim, which England had upon France, ſince the time of Edward the third. The neglect of that claim, he ſaid, ſince that period, had by no means injured the right. He then launched out into a florid encomium upon the virtues of the king; and ſaid, the thunder of the Engliſh nation, which had ſlept through two reigns, was reſerved ſolely for his arm; and God would proſper the noble undertaking. He concluded with ſaying, that if his majeſty ſhould engage in this gallant enterprize, he would undertake, that the clergy ſhould grant him a larger ſubſidy than had been ever granted to an Engliſh king; and he doubted not but the laity would follow their example.

Many hiſtorians have attributed the conqueſt of France to this ſpeech. It is certain however, it greatly tended to reconcile the minds of men to this enterprize, and effectually put a ſtop to the king's deſigns

againſt the church—Such were the vile politics of the clergy of thoſe times!

In the mean time lord Cobham, whoſe ſpirit in parliament had given birth to all this ferment, remained an exile in Wales, ſhifting frequently the ſcene of his retreat. In the ſimple manners of that mountainous country he found an aſylum, which he judged it imprudent to exchange for one, which might probably prove more hazardous beyond ſea.

But the zeal of his enemies was not eaſily baffled. After many fruitleſs attempts, they engaged the lord Powis in their intereſt, a very powerful perſon in thoſe parts; and in whoſe lands the lord Cobham was ſuppoſed to lie concealed.

This nobleman working upon his tenants by ſuch motives, as the great have ever in reſerve, had numbers ſoon upon the watch. This vigilance the lord Cobham could not eſcape. In the midſt of his fancied ſecurity, he was taken, carried to London in triumph, and put into the hands of the archbiſhop of Canterbury.

Lord Cobham had now been four years in Wales, but found his ſufferings had in no degree

degree diminiſhed the malice of his enemies. On the contrary, it ſhewed itſelf in ſtronger colours. Thoſe reſtraints under which the clergy acted before, were now removed. The ſuperiority which they had obtained, both in the parliament, and in the cabinet, laid every murmur aſleep; and they would boaſt, in the prophet's language, that not a dog durſt move his tongue againſt them.

Things being thus circumſtanced, lord Cobham, without any divination, foreſaw his fate. His fate indeed remained not long in ſuſpence. With every inſtance of barbarous inſult, which enraged ſuperſtition could invent, he was dragged to execution. St. Giles's fields was the place appointed; where both as a traitor, and a heretic, he was hung up in chains upon a gallows; and, fire being put under him, was burnt to death.

Such was the unworthy fate of this nobleman; who, though every way qualified to be the ornament of his country, fell a ſacrifice to unfeeling rage, and barbarous ſuperſtition.

Lord Cobham had been much converſant in the world; and had probably been en-

gaged, in the early part of his life, in the licence of it. His religion however put a thorough reſtraint upon a diſpoſition, naturally inclined to the allurements of pleaſure. He was a man of a very high ſpirit, and warm temper; neither of which his ſufferings could ſubdue. With very little temporizing he might have eſcaped the indignities he received from the clergy, who always conſidered him as an object beyond them: but the greatneſs of his ſoul could not brook conceſſion. In all his examinations, and through the whole of his behaviour, we ſee an authority and dignity in his manner, which ſpeak him the great man in all his afflictions.

He was a perſon of uncommon parts, and very extenſive talents; well qualified either for the cabinet or the field. In converſation he was remarkable for his ready and poignant wit.

His acquirements were equal to his parts. No ſpecies of learning, which was at that time in eſteem, had eſcaped his attention. It was his thirſt of knowledge indeed, which firſt brought him acquainted with the opinions of Wicliff. The novelty of them engaged

gaged his curioſity. He examined them as a philoſopher, and in the courſe of his examination became a Chriſtian.

In a word, we cannot but conſider lord Cobham, as having had a principal hand in giving ſtability to the opinions he embraced. He ſhewed the world, that religion was not merely calculated for a cloiſter, but might be introduced into faſhionable life; and that it was not below a gentleman to run the laſt hazard in its defence.

The END.

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p. 151

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THE

LIFE

OF

JOHN HUSS.

HAVING given ſome account of the opinions of Wicliff in England; let us follow the courſe of them abroad. In Bohemia particularly, we ſhall find they obtained great credit; where they were propagated by John Huſs, Jerome of Prague, and others of leſs note.

It muſt be confeſſed indeed, thoſe Bohemian reformers made little change in the opinions they found prevailing in their own church. Every ſtep they took was taken with extreme caution; and many of the Romiſh writers have been led from hence to queſtion the propriety of ranking them in a catalogue

catalogue of reformers. To rail at the popiſh clergy, we are told, hath ever been thought enough to give a man a place in this liſt. But this is making outcaſts indeed of theſe celebrated enquirers after truth. The papiſts burnt their bodies, and damned their ſouls for being proteſtants, and would have proteſtants damn their memory for being papiſts.

Unconcerned at the reproach, the proteſtants receive them with open arms, and conſider them as thoſe noble leaders, who made the firſt inroads into the regions of darkneſs; as thoſe who held up lights, tho' only faint and glimmering, which encouraged others to purſue their paths.

If we conſider ſuch only as reformers, whoſe opinions were *thoroughly* reformed, it is hard to ſay where the reformation began. Our Saviour conſiders thoſe as *for him, who were not againſt him:* much more reaſon have the proteſtants to conſider theſe Bohemians of their party, who, for the ſake of opinions, which have been ſince adopted by proteſtants, ſuffered the extremes of malice from papiſts; and who maintained principles, which would have led them, if they had not

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been cut off by their enemies, to a full diſcovery of that truth they aimed at.

John Huſs was born near Prague, in Bohemia, about the year 1376, at a village called Huſſinez, upon the borders of the black foreſt; from which village he had his name.

His father was a perſon in low circumſtances, but took more care, than is uſually taken among ſuch perſons, in the education of his ſon. He lived not however to ſee the fruit of his pains. After his death, his widow purſued his intention; and found means to ſend her ſon, though with difficulty enough even in the loweſt ſtation, to the univerſity of Prague.

Here a very extraordinary piety began to diſtinguiſh him. Among other inſtances of it, a ſtory is recorded, the truth of which is the rather to be ſuſpected, as we meet with frequent relations of the ſame kind in martyrologies. As he was reading the life of St. Lawrence, we are told, he was ſo ſtrongly affected with the conſtancy of that pious man in the midſt of his ſufferings, that he thruſt

thruſt his hand into the flame of a fire, by which he ſat, and held it there, till his fellow diſciple, who was ſitting by him, in great terror interfered. "I had only, ſaid (Huſs) an inclination to try, whether I had conſtancy to bear an inconſiderable part of what this martyr underwent."

In the year 1396 he took the degree of maſter of arts; and, ſoon after, that of batchelor of divinity. In 1400 his abilities and piety had ſo far recommended him, that he was choſen confeſſor to the queen: and eight years after he was elected rector of the univerſity.

During the courſe of theſe honours, he obtained a benefice likewiſe. John Mulheym, a perſon of large fortune in Prague, built a chapel, which he called Bethelem; and having endowed it in a very ample manner, appointed Huſs the miniſter of it.

Whatever religious ſcruples he might at this time have had, he had thus far kept them to himſelf. It is more than probable he had none of conſequence. The ſuperſtitions of popery reigned ſtill, in all tranquillity, in Bohemia; where the opinions of Wicliff,

Wicliff, which had long been fermenting in England, were yet unknown.

In the year 1381, Richard the ſecond of England married Ann, ſiſter of the king of Bohemia. This alliance opened a commerce between the two nations; and many perſons, during an interval of ſeveral years, paſſed over from Bohemia into England, on the account either of expectances, curioſity, or buſineſs: ſome on the account of ſtudy. With a view of this latter kind, a young Bohemian nobleman, who had finiſhed his ſtudies in the univerſity of Prague, ſpent ſome time at Oxford. Here he became acquainted with the opinions of Wicliff, read his books, and admired both him and them. At his return to Prague he renewed an acquaintance, which grew into an entire familiarity, with John Huſs; and put into his hands the writings of Wicliff, which he had brought over with him. They conſiſted chiefly of thoſe warm pieces of that reformer, in which he inveighs againſt the corruptions of the clergy.

Theſe writings ſtruck Huſs with the force of revelation. He was a man of great ſanctity of manners himſelf, and had the higheſt notions of the paſtoral care. With concern he

he had long ſeen, or thought he ſaw, abuſes among the clergy of his time, which were truly deplorable. But his diffidence kept pace with his piety; and he could not perſuade himſelf to *caſt the firſt ſtone*. He now found that he had not been ſingular. He ſaw theſe abuſes and corruptions dragged into open light; and it even mortified him to ſee that freedom in another, which he had been withheld, by a mere ſcruple, from exerting himſelf.

As to the more alarming opinions of Wicliff, though it is probable Huſs became at this time acquainted with ſome of them, yet it doth not *appear* they made any impreſſion upon his mind; they were leſs obvious, and required more examination. From the language however, in which he always ſpoke of this reformer, we cannot imagine he had taken offence at any thing he had heard of him. He would call him an angel ſent from heaven to enlighten mankind. He would mention among his friends his meeting with the works of Wicliff, as the moſt fortunate circumſtance of his life; and would often ſay, he wiſhed for no better

eternity,

eternity, than to exiſt hereafter with that excellent man.

From this time, both in the ſchools, and in the pulpit, as he had opportunity, he would inveigh, with great warmth, againſt eccleſiaſtical abuſes. He would point out the bad adminiſtration of the church, and the bad lives of the clergy; and would pathetically lament the miſerable ſtate of the people, who were under the government of the one, and the influence of the other.

Indeed the ſtate of the Bohemian clergy, as all their hiſtorians teſtify, was at this time exceedingly corrupt. Religion was not only converted into a trade; but this trade was carried on with the utmoſt knavery and rapacity. Avarice was their predominant vice. One of their biſhops, we are told, was ſo ſordidly addicted to it, that, being aſked, What was the moſt diſagreeable noiſe in nature? he anſwered, That of mouths feeding at his own table. Stories of this kind are unqueſtionably exaggerated by the zeal of proteſtant writers. We may venture however to make large deductions, and yet ſtill leave a very ſufficient charge againſt the morals of the Bohemian clergy.

It is no wonder therefore if Huſs was heard with attention on ſuch an argument. Indeed, all ſober and ingenuous men began to think favourably of him; and to ſee the neceſſity of expoſing the clergy, were it only to open the eyes of the people, and prevent their being ſeduced by vile examples.

There were, at this time, in Prague, among the followers of Huſs, two ingenious foreigners; who, being unacquainted with the language of the country, invented a method of expoſing the pride of the Romiſh clergy, which fully anſwered their end, and was well ſuited to the ſimplicity of the times. They hung up, in the public hall of the univerſity, two large pictures, in one of which were repreſented Chriſt and his apoſtles, in that humility, and modeſty of attire, with which they appeared upon earth; in the other, the pope and his cardinals, in all that flow of garment, gold, and embroidery, in which their dignity ſo much conſiſteth. Theſe pictures, it is probable, as pieces of art, were of no value; but the contraſt they exhibited was ſo exceedingly glaring, that among the common

people

people they had more than the force of argument.

The ſchiſm between the two popes, which hath already been mentioned, ſtill continued. This religious quarrel, having raged with ſufficient animoſity during the reigns of the two pontiffs, who gave it birth, was bequeathed to their ſucceſſors. It had now maintained itſelf above thirty years, and had been the common firebrand of Europe, through that whole tract of time.

The cardinals had made many attempts to put an end to this confuſion; but without effect: the ambition of the reigning prelates interfered. To ſtrengthen their hands, the ſacred college at length applyed to ſome of the leading princes of Europe. Henry the fourth of England ſeems to have intereſted himſelf as much as any in this affair. He wrote with great ſpirit to Gregory the twelfth; told him, that, at a moderate computation, 230,000 men had loſt their lives in this quarrel; expoſtulated with him for upholding it; and adviſed him to ſubmit to the deciſion of the council, which was then aſſembling at Piſa.

The intention of this council, it ſeems, was to elect a new pope, and to make the two other popes give up their claims; which, at the time of their election, they had agreed in ſuch circumſtances to do. Accordingly, in the year 1410 the cardinals of each party met at Piſa, where a new election was made in favour of Alexander the fifth. This pontiff, to ſhew his gratitude to his good friend the king of England, granted his ſubjects a full remiſſion of all manner of ſins, which was to be diſpenſed on three ſet days, at St. Bartholomew's in Smithfield. This was not done entirely gratis; but the indulgent pope had made the expence ſo very eaſy, that, except indeed the moſt indigent, all might enjoy the benefit of his abſolution.

At the time of this pope's election, Huſs, and his followers began to make a noiſe in the world. They had now gotten ſome of the works of Wicliff tranſlated into the Sclavonian tongue; which were read with great attention in every part of Bohemia; and though it doth not appear, that any of the more offenſive doctrines of that reformer had even yet obtained footing there; yet it is certain the eſtabliſhed clergy had in a great meaſure

meaſure loſt that reverence, which had been hitherto paid them.

To check the growth of hereſy, was the firſt work in which Alexander engaged. He was ſcarce ſeated in his chair, when he thundered out a very ſevere bull, directed to the archbiſhop of Prague, and it is probable, directed by him likewiſe; in which he orders that prelate to make ſtrict enquiry after the followers of Wicliff; to apprehend, and impriſon them; and, if neceſſary, to call in the ſecular arm.

Nor was private cauſe of pique wanting to engage the clergy in the ſevereſt meaſures. Beſides the ſpirited language, in which Huſs had always treated them, he had, on the following occaſion, made himſelf particularly obnoxious to the whole order.

Learning having been for many years very little the taſte of the Bohemian gentry, the Germans, who in great numbers frequented the univerſity of Prague, and enjoyed, by the ſtatutes of the founder, a fourth part of the authority in it, had, by degrees, gotten poſſeſſion of the whole. This, when letters began to revive under the influence of Huſs, became inconvenient. The Germans ſtuck

together; and a Bohemian, even in a univerſity of his own country, could meet with little encouragement in literary purſuits. Huſs ſaw with regret theſe difficulties; and endeavoured with all his attention to remove them. Having put himſelf at the head of a conſiderable party, he made an application at court; and by his intereſt there, which with the queen eſpecially was very great, obtained a deciſion, by which the authority of theſe ſtrangers was abridged, and the government of the univerſity thrown into its natural channel. The Germans, piqued at this, left Prague in a body and ſettled themſelves in other houſes of learning. Hiſtorians rate the number of theſe diſcontented ſtudents at three thouſand.

This temporary evil opened the mouths of Huſs's enemies. The clergy in particular took the alarm; and immediately ſhewed their diſguſt, at ſeeing more weight thrown into a ſcale, which they had ever been deſirous of rendering as light as poſſible. It is worth remarking, that this is the * ſecond inſtance in the courſe of a few pages, in which

* See the beginning of Wicliff's life.

which the herd of the Romiſh clergy have conſidered a ſeat of learning as an intereſt oppoſite to their own. Indeed in this caſe, they had more to ſay. Huſs, who was now ſole leader of the univerſity had long ſhewn himſelf their avowed opponent; and if ſingle, he had given them ſo much cauſe of alarm, he became an object of double terror ſupported by a multitude. They reſolved therefore to make a handle of the affair of the univerſity; and though it was purely of a literary nature, it was plauſibly converted into a buſineſs of religion.

Among thoſe who took offence at theſe proceedings, none took more than the archbiſhop of Prague. Having publiſhed the bull he had received from Rome, he ſoon after publiſhed a reſcript of his own; requiring all, who were poſſeſſed of any of the works of Wicliff, to bring them to him. Accordingly, many copies of different parts of that reformers writings, (we are told above 200) were brought; which the archbiſhop immediately condemned to the flames. In this buſineſs, it was generally ſuppoſed, he acted at the ſame time a diſingenuous, an illegal, and an unjuſt part. In the firſt place,

thro' the ambiguity of the reſcript, it was imagined, he meant only to examine the books; to which the honeſt poſſeſſors of them had no objection; not doubting but ſuch an examination would redound to the honour of their maſter: Huſs himſelf tells us, that he ſent in his books merely on this ſuppoſition.—Beſides, they thought the primate had no authority for what he had done. They knew he had none from the pope; and if the action were his own, they could not but eſteem it as a very illegal ſtretch of power. —And if it was illegal, as it appeared to be, they thought it farther, a very conſiderable injury. For in thoſe days before printing was invented, books had their value: and many of theſe likewiſe were ornamented with ſilver in a very expenſive manner. It was an unlucky circumſtance too, in prejudice to the archbiſhop, that he was a moſt illiterate man. We are told he was ſo to ſuch a degree, that by way of ridicule, he was commonly called *alphabetarius*, or the A, B, C doctor. As it was well known therefore he could not read theſe books himſelf, and as no examination of them had been heard of, what he had done ſeemed rather an attack

tack upon learning itſelf, than upon the doctrines of Wicliff.

This action of the archbiſhop gave great offence; and Huſs remonſtrated againſt it with as much warmth, as the candour and native modeſty of his temper would admit. But notwithſtanding the propriety of his own behaviour, it is allowed, his followers acted with great indecency. Irritated by the loſs of their books, they reſolved to retaliate a little of that ſpirit, in which the injury had been done. Having procured a copy therefore of the archbiſhop's reſcript, they burnt it with great pomp and ceremony in the public ſtreet.

Kindled at this treatment, the archbiſhop's zeal flamed out in all its violence; and eager to do more than he had the power to do himſelf, he hurried to the king, and laid his complaints at the foot of the throne.

Winceſlaus, king of Bohemia, whom we ſhall have frequent occaſion to mention, was a prince, who looked for nothing in royalty, but the free indulgence of his paſſions. Matters of government were little his concern: and matters of religion ſtill leſs. He had been educated in the beſt ſchool for improvement,

provement, the ſchool of affliction; yet he had profited little by the leſſons he had there received. He had good natural parts, and great talents for buſineſs; but diſſimulation was the only talent which he employed. *Temporibus inſidiari* was his maxim. If he had one fixed principle of government, it was never to encourage the zealots of any party. He cajoled the archbiſhop therefore with that art, which was natural to him; and endeavouring to convince him of the impropriety of his own interpoſition, left him to manage the ſectaries, as he was able.

The archbiſhop was thoroughly mortified at the king's indifference for religion; and as he found no redreſs from him, he determined to try the force of his own authority. After mature deliberation, he prohibited Huſs, by an interdict, from preaching in his chapel of Bethelem. Huſs, as a member of the univerſity, which held immediately of the Roman ſee, appealed to the pope.

Alexander the fifth was now dead; poiſoned, as was commonly ſuppoſed, by an ambitious cardinal, who found the means to ſucceed him. This was Balthaſar Coſſa, who afterwards aſſumed the name of John

the

the twenty third; a man, whoſe vicious life was probably the only foundation of the ſuſpicion. In his youth he had exerciſed piracy: but finding this profeſſion dangerous, he retired to Bolognia, where he applied himſelf to ſtudy. His abilities, for he was maſter of many uſeful talents, ſoon found a patron in Benedict the ninth; under whom he was initiated into all the myſteries of the conclave.

John was preſently made acquainted with the ſituation of affairs in Bohemia. Huſs had preached a ſermon at Prague, in which, it was thought, he had ſpoken lightly of oral tradition. This was immediately caught by the orthodox clergy; and carried, among other things, in the form of an accuſation to Rome. The appeal therefore, and the accuſation accompanied each other.

John ſeems to have had ſomething elſe in his head at this time, beſides religion. Without examining the affair himſelf, he left it to his delegate, the cardinal de Columna; who appointed Huſs a day for his appearance.

The report of this affair ſpread a general alarm through Bohemia; where the whole party trembled for their chief. A powerful

powerful interceſſion, headed by the queen herſelf, was made to the king, requeſting his interpoſition. Winceſlaus complied; and diſpatched ambaſſadors to the pope, who in very preſſing terms requeſted his holineſs to diſpenſe with Huſs's perſonal appearance; alledging his innocence, and the dangers he would run in paſſing through Germany, where he had many enemies.

With theſe ambaſſadors, Huſs ſent his Proctors; who were treated with great ſeverity, and in the end impriſoned. This was enough to give him a warning of his fate. The irritated pope excommunicated him, as it ſeems, on the mere accuſation of his enemies.

This treatment had no tendency to leſſen the popularity of Huſs. His ſufferings indeed gave him only the greater influence. The people conſidered him as ſtanding ſingle in a common cauſe; as having paid their forfeiture as well as his own. Gratitude and compaſſion therefore were added to their eſteem; and he never was ſo much the idol of popular favour, as he was now. He had his adherents too among the higher ranks. The nobility were in general diſpoſed to ſerve him;

him; and he wanted not friends even among the clergy.

As he was thus ſupported, we need not wonder that the diſgrace he ſuffered ſat light upon him. We find him indeed no longer in the character of a public preacher; and ſome authors write that he retired from Prague. It is certain however, that, except preaching, he continued ſtill to diſcharge every branch of the paſtoral care. One method he uſed was to give out queſtions, which he encouraged the people to diſcuſs in private, and to come to him with their difficulties. Many of theſe queſtions had a tendency to invalidate the pope's authority.

Every day made it now plainer, that the goſpellers, as the followers of Huſs were, at this time, called, had ſcarce received any check. The primate was wretched to the laſt degree. The pope's authority had appeared to be of little weight; his own of leſs: the king was wholly indifferent: the emperor alone remained, to whom application could be made. To him therefore he reſolved to apply; but upon his journey he fell ſick, and died; fretted, as was commonly ſuppoſed, beyond ſufferance, at the perplexity

ity of the affair.—The archbiſhop of Prague was a well intentioned, weak man; under the influence of violent paſſions: a moſt unhappy compoſition to be intruſted with power.

The new archbiſhop, notwithſtanding his predeceſſor had failed in his deſign of cruſhing this riſing hereſy, had the courage to make a farther attempt. He called a council of doctors; by whom, after much debating, ſome articles againſt Huſs, and his adherents were drawn up, and publiſhed in form. They were intended to leſſen his credit with the people; but they produced only a ſpirited anſwer, in which Huſs recapitulated what the late archbiſhop had done, and ſhewed that he had never been able to prove any hereſy againſt him: he concluded with begging that he might be ſuffered to meet, face to face, any one, who pretended to bring ſuch a charge againſt him, and doubted not but he ſhould be able to purge himſelf, to the ſatisfaction of the whole kingdom of Bohemia.

Soon afterwards Huſs publiſhed another piece againſt the uſurpations of the court of Rome. To this the archbiſhop and his council

council replied: but in a manner ſo futile, that they did more injury to their cauſe, (eſpecially where prejudice ran high againſt them) than even their adverſaries themſelves had done. They applyed to the pope too for aſſiſtance; but the pope ſatisfied himſelf with exhorting the king to ſuppreſs the peſtilent doctrines of Wicliff; and, if poſſible, to curb the inſolence of Huſs and his followers.

Indeed the pope had not leiſure at this time to attend to controverſy. His ambition had incited him to quarrel with his neighbour the king of Naples, into whoſe dominions he was meditating an irruption. But he fell into his own ſnare. He declared himſelf before he was well prepared; and the wary Neapolitan taking the advantage of his ignorance in matters of war, invaded the patrimony, and dividing his forces, ſat down before ſeveral of the papal towns at once. In this perplexity John had recourſe to the eſtabliſhed manner of levying troops. He diſpatched legates into various parts of Chriſtendom, who were largely commiſſioned to grant pardons and indulgencies to all, who would inliſt under his banners.

Among

Among other places, one of theſe recruiting officers came to Prague. Winceſlaus had his reaſons for favouring the pope; and foreſeeing that the legate would be oppoſed by Huſs and the goſpellers, forbad them by proclamation to interfere.

But the zeal of theſe ſectaries was of too high a temper to bear controul. They thought their conſciences concerned; and would have looked upon themſelves as guilty, had they ſtood aloof, and ſeen the people deluded. They took every opportunity therefore of expoſing the legate and his buſineſs; and of ſhewing the folly of truſting to the pardon of a ſinful man. Huſs in particular exerted himſelf with great ſpirit, and diſperſed among his friends many little tracts, which aſſiſted them with proper arguments. His activity put an entire ſtop to the levy.

This behaviour was greatly reſented by the king; and the magiſtrates, who acted by his direction, ventured to ſeize three of the moſt zealous. The perſon of Huſs was too ſacred to be touched.

The impriſonment of theſe men threw the whole city into an uproar. The more forward of the goſpellers took arms, and ſurrounded

rounded the town-hall, where the magiſtrates were then ſitting. With loud cries they demanded to have their companions ſet at liberty. The magiſtrates alarmed, came forward to the ſtairs, ſoothed them with gentle language, and promiſed, that their companions ſhould be immediately releaſed. The people went quietly home; and the unfortunate priſoners were inſtantly put to death.

Huſs diſcovered, on this occaſion, a true Chriſtian ſpirit. The late riot had given him great concern; and he had now ſo much weight with the people, as to reſtrain them from attempting any farther violence; though ſo notorious a breach of faith might almoſt have juſtified any meaſures.

This moderation was conſtrued by the oppoſite party into fear. The clergy, and magiſtrates, who acted in concert, well knew on which ſide the balance of power lay: they knew that, even at the ſound of a bell, Huſs could have been ſurrounded by thouſands of zealots, who might have laughed at the police of the city. When they ſaw them therefore, notwithſtanding this force, act in ſo tame a manner, they eaſily

concluded they were under the influence of fear;—that the death of their friends had ſtruck a terror into them,—and that this was the time entirely to ſubdue them.

Full of theſe miſtaken notions, the archbiſhop waited upon the king; aſſuring him, that if he choſe to cruſh the goſpellers, and give peace to his kingdom, this was the time.

Winceſlaus, whatever appearances he might think it prudent to aſſume, was in his heart no friend to theſe reformers; whom he conſidered as a neſt of hornets, which he durſt not moleſt. While he ſeemed to favour, he deteſted them; and would have ventured a conſiderable ſtake to have freed his kingdom from what he eſteemed ſo great a nuiſance.

He heard the archbiſhop therefore with attention: He entered into his ſcheme, and in *his* ſpirit, but with ſomewhat more of temper. He knew the inveteracy of the diſeaſe would admit of palliatives only: violent medicines at leaſt he thought improper. He reſolved therefore to take ſome ſtep, though not ſo vigorous as that the clergy dictated. After much heſitation he at laſt baniſhed

baniſhed Huſs from Prague. The late tumults were his pretence. This was the firſt public inſtance he gave of his diſlike to the goſpellers.

Huſs immediately retired to his native place, where the principal perſon of the country being his friend, he lived unmoleſted; and was greatly reſorted to by all men of a ſerious turn in thoſe parts; which contributed not a little to ſpread his opinions, and eſtabliſh his ſect.

Some hiſtorians give a different account of his leaving Prague; and make it a voluntary act. It is poſſible there may be ſome truth in both theſe accounts. The king might expreſs his pleaſure, which Huſs might willingly comply with.

During his retreat at Huſſinez, he ſpent much of his time in writing. Here he compoſed his celebrated treatiſe, *Upon the church*; out of which his adverſaries drew moſt of thoſe objections, which were afterwards ſo fatally brought againſt him at Conſtance.

From this place likewiſe he dated a paper, intitled, *The ſix errors*; which he fixed on the gate of the chapel of Bethelem. It was

levelled againſt *indulgencies*;—againſt the abuſe of *excommunication*;—againſt *believing* in the pope;—againſt the unlimited *obedience* required by the ſee of Rome;—againſt *ſimony*; with which he charged the whole church; and againſt *making* the body of Chriſt in the maſs.

This paper was greedily received in Bohemia; and increaſed that odium which had been raiſed againſt the clergy. Many anecdotes alſo againſt the dignified eccleſiaſtics had found their way among the people; by whom they were dreſſed out in the moſt unfavourable colours. So many open mouths, and ſuch an abundance of matter to fill them, rendered the clergy in a ſhort time, ſo infamous, that few of them durſt appear in public.

The politic king ſaw an advantage. Papiſt and goſpeller were alike to him: he had already made an engine of one party; and he now ſaw a favourable opportunity of working with the other. In ſhort, he thought he had the means before him of repleniſhing his coffers.

He told the clergy, "He was ſorry to hear ſuch complaints againſt them;—that he

he was determined to put a ſtop to theſe enormities; that Bohemia would be the ſcandal of Chriſtendom;—that he had already done juſtice upon the ſectaries;—and that an *eſtabliſhment* ſhould be no ſecurity to *them*." His language was eaſily underſtood; and large commutations were offered, and accepted.

One thing is too remarkable to eſcape notice. "That tythes were mere temporal endowments, and might be reſumed by the temporal lord, when the prieſt was undeſerving," was that doctrine of Wicliff, which gave moſt offence in England; and, as it ſeems, in Bohemia likewiſe. It was conſidered by the churchmen of both kingdoms as an hereſy of the moſt peſtilent kind. On this occaſion however, the king inſiſting upon it, the Bohemian clergy were glad to redeem their tythes by owning the doctrine orthodox.—Thus the king played one party againſt the other; and left neither any cauſe to triumph. No man underſtood better the balance of parties, nor the advantages, which might accrue from adjuſting it properly.

About the time of this conteſt with the clergy, we find Huſs again in Prague, though

it does not appear, whether the king permitted or connived at him.

Alexander the fifth, the predeceſſor of John the twenty third had been choſen pope, we have ſeen, to put an end to the ſchiſm, which raged in the Roman church; on which event it had been expected the other two popes would relinquiſh their claims. So they had promiſed at their election. But reſtleſs ambition intervened. Neither of them would give up his power; and from that time the church was governed (if ſuch anarchy can be called government) by three popes at once. Their names were now John, Gregory, and Benedict.

With a view to cloſe this fatal ſchiſm; to remove ſuch diſorders in the church, as had ſprung up during the continuance of it; and to bring about a thorough reformation of the clergy, the emperor Sigiſmond, in the year 1414, convened a general council.

Sigiſmond, the brother of Winceſlaus, was the moſt accompliſhed prince of the age in which he lived. To the virtues of a patriot he added a greatneſs of mind, and dignity

dignity of manner, which adorned a throne. It might perhaps be ſaid too, that he excelled in the princely art of diſſimulation: that indeed was the great foible in his character. He was himſelf a man of letters; and gloried in being thought the patron of learning. He had enobled, on the occaſion of ſome ſolemnity, a learned doctor, who had ſpoken an eloquent oration. In the proceſſion, which followed, the doctor choſe rather to walk among the nobility, than among his learned brethren. "Sir, (ſaid the emperor obſerving it,) diminiſh not a body, which it is not in my power to repleniſh: the corps you have joined I can augment when I pleaſe." This prince was more ſucceſsful in his negotiations than in his wars; and yet he was eſteemed a better ſoldier, than a ſtateſman. In his cabinet he often blundered; but rarely in his camp. His political errors were yet generally retrieved by a noble air of ingenuity, and an addreſs which nothing could withſtand. His manners were the moſt humane and gentle. He would often ſay, "When I forgive an injury, I acquire a friend." But what is very ſurpri-

fing in a character of this liberal caſt, he was a bigot.

Beſides the reaſons already mentioned for calling a general council at this time, Sigiſmond had other motives. The Ottoman arms having lately given a ſevere blow to the empire, and growing daily more formidable, he was very ſollicitous to oppoſe them; and he could not ſo effectually do it, while Europe continued in a divided ſtate.

This famous council was convened at Conſtance, one of the moſt ſouthern towns in Germany, ſituate on the confines of Switzerland, as nearly as might be, in the middle of Chriſtendom. Hither from all parts of Europe princes and prelates, clergy and laity, regulars and ſeculars, flocked together. Mr. Fox hath given us an humourous catalogue of them. "There were, (ſays he) archbiſhops and biſhops 346, abbots and doctors 564, princes, dukes, earls, knights and ſquires 16000, common-women 450, barbers 600, muſicians, cooks and jeſters 320."—Four preſidents were choſen from four nations, Germany, France, England and Italy.

Ceremonies

Ceremonies and punctilios being ſettled, the conſultation opened. That a reformation of the clergy was neceſſary, was agreed on all hands; but a debate aroſe, in what part of the clerical ſcale it ſhould begin? While ſome contended it ſhould begin a minoritis, at the inferior clergy, the emperor replied briſkly, "Non a minoritis, ſed a majoritis." They began therefore with pope John. This unhappy pontiff, being convicted of many crimes, was deprived, and impriſoned. Gregory was prudent enough to give in a reſignation; and eſcaped on eaſier terms. But Benedict continued long obſtinate. The king of Navarre eſpouſed his cauſe for ſome time; but that prince forſaking him, he was deprived and excommunicated. In the room of theſe three Martin was choſen.—Thus at length was cloſed the great ſchiſm of the Roman church; and here too ended the reformation of the clergy; a work begun indeed with ſpirit; but unhappily left unfiniſhed.—But this is anticipating the affairs of the council; for the depoſition of the three popes was in fact conducted leiſurely with the other buſineſs of it.

The

The next grand deſign of the fathers in this council was to apply remedies to the diſorders of the church. By the diſorders of the church nothing more was meant than Wicliff's hereſy; the extirpation of which took up a full moiety of the council's time. Wicliff was now dead: their rage therefore againſt him was ineffectual. What was in their power however they did: they reviled his memory: they condemned his tenets: they burnt his books: nay they ordered his very bones to be dug up and conſumed to aſhes.

Their rage however, unavailing againſt him, fell with double weight upon his followers. Of theſe Huſs was the principal. Some time before the council was opened, application had been made to the emperor to bring him to Conſtance. The emperor engaged in the buſineſs, and ſent two gentlemen into Bohemia to communicate the affair to Huſs himſelf. Huſs directly anſwered, "That he deſired nothing more than to purge himſelf publicly of the imputation of hereſy; and that he eſteemed himſelf happy in ſo fair an opportunity of doing it, as the approaching council afforded."

Before

Before he began his journey, he thought it proper to give notice, (which he did by putting up papers in the moſt public parts of Prague) that he was going to Conſtance; and that whoever had objections againſt him or his doctrine, might make them there. He provided himſelf likewiſe with proper teſtimonials; and what is very remarkable, he obtained one from the biſhop of Nazareth, inquiſitor general of hereſy in Bohemia; which is ſtill extant. In this the biſhop declares, that as far as he had any opportunity to know, (and he had had many opportunities) Huſs had never ſhewn the leaſt inclination to impugn any article of the Chriſtian faith.—He procured likewiſe a paſſport from the emperor.

Thus provided, in october 1414, he ſet out for Conſtance, accompanied by two Bohemian noblemen, the barons of Clum, at Latzenbock; who were among the moſt eminent of his diſciples, and followed their maſter merely thro' reſpect and love. Some writers ſay, they were required by the emperor to attend him.

Through whatever town of conſequence he paſſed, he had the following paper poſted up

up in ſome public part of it. " John Huſs, B. D. is now upon his journey to Conſtance, there to defend his faith; which by God's help he will defend unto death. Willing therefore to ſatisfy every man, who hath ought to object againſt him, he publiſhed in Bohemia, and now doth publiſh in this noble and imperial city his ſaid intention. Whoever therefore hath any error or hereſy to lay to the charge of the ſaid John Huſs, be it known unto him, that the ſaid John is ready to anſwer the ſame at the approaching council."

The civilities, and even reverence, which he met with every where, exceeded his imagination. The ſtreets, and ſometimes the very roads were lined with people, whom reſpect rather than curioſity drew together. He was uſhered into towns with acclamations; and indeed paſſed through Germany in a kind of triumph. He could not help expreſſing his ſurprize at the reception he met with. " I thought, (ſaid he,) I had " been an outcaſt; I now ſee my worſt ene- " mies are in Bohemia." At Nuremburgh he was received with particular diſtinction; the magiſtrates and clergy waited upon him

in

in form; and being convinced of his innocence and integrity, assured him they had no doubt but the council would dismiss him with honour.—These instances of the respect he met with are worth mentioning, not only as they shew the veneration in which Huss was generally held; but as they shew likewise how well-disposed the Germans were, even at that early day, to a reformation. This scene was acted about an hundred years before the time of Luther.—In three weeks Huss arrived at Constance; where, no one molesting him, he took private lodgings. One of his historians tells us, with an air of triumph, that his hostess's name was *Faith*.

Soon after Huss left Prague, Stephen Paletz left it likewise; a person employed by the clergy there to manage the intended prosecution against him at Constance. Paletz was a man of good parts, plausible morals, and more learning than was commonly found among the churchmen of those days. He had contracted an early intimacy with Huss: their studies had been nearly the same: their opinions seldom opposite. When John the twenty third sent his legate to Prague, to levy forces against the king of Naples, his bulls were

choſe. Here by an artful diſplay of ſome new talents, of which he had a great variety, he obtained not only the pope's protection, but his favour; and became a very uſeful perſon in the capacity of one, who was ready for any employment, which nobody elſe would undertake. When it was reſolved in the conclave to have Huſs brought before the council of Conſtance, this man was tamper'd with. He made large promiſes: "He had formerly been acquainted with Huſs at Prague, and knew ſuch things of him, as perhaps nobody elſe did." In ſhort, being thought an excellent inſtrument for the purpoſe, and being well penſioned, and inſtructed, he ſet out among the pope's retinue.

When Huſs arrived at Conſtance, he found the council almoſt full: the more conſiderable members of it were either already arrived, or arriving every day: the pope had been there ſome days; and held his reſidence in a caſtle near the city.

Immediately after Huſs's arrival, his friend the baron de Clum notified it to the pope; whom he informed at the ſame time, that Huſs had obtained the emperor's ſafe conduct,

duct, to which he begged his holineſs would add his own. "If he had killed my brother, (anſwered John vehemently,) he ſhould have it."

Huſs depending upon his innocence, and ſtill more upon the emperor's honour, uſed the ſame freedom of ſpeech at Conſtance, which he had ever uſed at Prague. He ſuppoſed he ſhould have been called upon to preach before the council; and had provided two ſermons for that purpoſe; in one of which he made a confeſſion of his faith; and in the other ſhewed the neceſſity of a reformation of the clergy. But the council did not put him upon preaching; which ſhews, as Lenfant ſeems to inſinuate, that they were predetermined to deſtroy him. They were unwilling to give him an opportunity of ſpeaking, without interruption, to the people; knowing that his noble ſimplicity, his doctrine far from heretical, and the engaging ſweetneſs of his manner, would have greatly conciliated the minds of men in his favour.

In the mean time his adverſaries, particularly the two already mentioned, were indefatigable. They were continually with the

leading members of the council, plotting, contriving, and concerting in what way their ſchemes might run the leaſt riſk of a miſcarriage. Paletz took upon himſelf the taſk of drawing up articles, which he did with ſuch acrimony, as left no room for the amendment of others. The effect of theſe ſecret negotiations ſoon appeared.

About the beginning of december, the biſhops of Auſburgh and Trent came to Huſs's lodgings, informing him they were ſent by the pope and the college of cardinals, who were now diſpoſed to hear what he had to urge in his defence. Huſs excuſed his attendance. "I came voluntarily hither, ſaid he, to be examined before the whole council; and to them only I will render myſelf accountable." The biſhops aſſuming a friendly air, began to preſs him: and after many aſſurances, on their part, of the purity of their intentions, and ſome farther oppoſition on his, he at length complied.

His examination before the pope and cardinals was a mere farce. They wanted him in their power; and even ſtill ſeemed irreſolute how to act. Paletz preſſed to have him impriſoned; and aſſured the cardinals, he

he was daily increaſing his party by that unbridled liberty of ſpeech, in which he was indulged.

While this point was debating, Huſs was engaged in the following ſcene. As he waited in a gallery, a Franciſcan came up to him; and, after many croſſings, and geſticulations common among that ſort of men, accoſted him thus. "Reverend father, of whom the world ſpeaketh ſo loudly, excuſe a poor friar's impertinence. All my life long have I been enquiring after truth. Many difficulties have ariſen in the courſe of my enquiries: ſome I have conquered; others have been above my abilities. Among the reſt, none hath occaſioned me ſo much perplexity, as the doctrine of the ſacrament. How kindly ſhould I take it, would you rectify my errors. I am informed, you hold, that the bread ſtill remains material, after the words of the conſecration?" Huſs told him, he had been miſinformed. Upon which the Franciſcan ſeeming ſurpriſed, repeated his queſtion, and received the ſame anſwer. Aſking the ſame queſtion a third time, the baron de Clum, who attended Huſs, turned to the friar, and ſaid with ſome

aſperity, "Why, doſt thou believe this reverend father would lie to thee? How many anſwers doſt thou expect?" "Gentle ſir, (ſaid the Franciſcan, be not wroth with your poor ſervant.—I aſked but in mere ſimplicity, and through a deſire of knowledge.—May I then, (ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to Huſs, preſume to aſk, what kind of union of the godhead and manhood ſubſiſted in the perſon of Chriſt?" Huſs ſurpriſed at this queſtion, ſaid to the baron in the Sclavonian tongue, "This is one of the moſt difficult queſtions in divinity:" And then turning to the Franciſcan, told him, he did not believe him to be that uninformed perſon whom he pretended to be. The Franciſcan finding himſelf ſuſpected, went off with the ſame ſanctified grimaces, with which he had approached; and the baron aſking a ſoldier of the pope's guard, who ſtood near him, if he knew the Franciſcan, the ſoldier told him, that his name was Didace; and that he was eſteemed the moſt ſubtil divine in Lombardy. It afterwards appeared, that the whole was a formed ſcheme of the cardinals, who had ſent this perſon to endeavour to draw ſome new matter of accuſation againſt Huſs

Huſs from his own mouth. The ſtory may give an idea of the unmanly artifices which were practiſed againſt him.

The friar was ſcarce gone, when an officer appeared with a party of guards; and ſeizing Huſs, ſhewed his warrant to apprehend him. Aſtoniſhed at ſuch perfidy, the baron ran inſtantly to the pope, and demanded an audience, or rather indeed puſhed rudely into his preſence; where with great heat of language, (for he was naturally a warm man) he remonſtrated againſt ſo notorious a breach of faith. "Can your holineſs, (ſaid he) deny, that with your own mouth, you made me a formal promiſe, that Huſs ſhould remain unmoleſted at Conſtance?" The pope was confounded: he ſat ſpeechleſs for ſome time: at laſt, he brought out by ſyllables,—that it was the act of the cardinals;—that he had no hand in the matter;—that he could not help it.

In truth, the pope was an object of pity as well as blame. Foreſeeing the ſtorm, which was already gathering againſt him, he was looking round for ſhelter; and was become at this time ſo diſpirited, ſo timid, and fearful of giving offence, among the cardi-

nals particularly, from whom he had ſo much both to hope and fear, that he neither did, nor ſaid any thing but what he knew would be agreeable. The baron perceiving the pope would not interfere, left him with indignation, reſolving to try his influence with the other members of the council.

In the mean time Huſs was conveyed privately to Conſtance, where he was confined in the chapter-houſe of the cathedral, till a more proper place could be found.

Upon the banks of the Rhine, where that river leaves the lake of Conſtance, ſtood a lonely monaſtery, belonging to the Franciſcans, the whole intereſt of which order was bent againſt Huſs. Thither he was conveyed, and lodged in the lower part of a noiſome tower.

Yet even here his active ſpirit could not reſt unemployed. By the help of a ſingle ray of light, which ſhone through an aperture of his dungeon, he compoſed many little tracts; which afterwards found their way into Bohemia, and were in great eſteem among his followers. Of theſe one was a comment upon the commandments; a ſecond upon the Lord's prayer: a third was an eſſay upon

upon the knowledge and love of God; and a fourth upon the three great enemies of mankind. Beſides theſe, were ſome others.

Whilſt Huſs was thus employed, the baron, and many of his other friends, were labouring for his liberty. They applied ſeparately to the leading members of the council; and addreſſed themſelves particularly to the four preſidents. All was in vain: effectual pains had been taken to fruſtrate their endeavours; every ear was ſtopped, and every avenue barred. Baffled, and diſconcerted, the baron was obliged to deſiſt, full of reflections upon the horrors of eccleſiaſtical tyranny.

In the midſt of theſe endeavours for the recovery of his liberty, Huſs was ſeized with a violent diſorder, probably brought on by unwholſome air. His diſeaſe increaſing, his life was in queſtion. The pope alarmed, ſent his own phyſicians to attend him. A grand council was called. "What ſhould be done? ſhould the heretic dye, himſelf and his doctrine yet uncondemned, what diſcredit would ariſe to the church of Chriſt?" They reſolved therefore to draw up articles againſt him, and condemn him

in priſon. Articles accordingly were drawn up, and a formal citation ſent.

The meſſengers found him extended upon what ſerved him for a bed. He raiſed himſelf upon his arm. His eyes ſunk and languid, his viſage pale, and emaciated; "You ſee, ſaid he, friends, my condition. Do I ſeem like a man fit to defend a cauſe in a public aſſembly?—Go—tell your maſters what you have ſeen.—But ſtay; tell them likewiſe, that if they will only allow me an advocate, I will not fail, even in this condition, to join iſſue with them."

This requeſt occaſioned a new debate. All were againſt cloſing with it; but they wanted a pretext. Fortunately an old canon was produced, which forbad any one to defend the cauſe of an heretic. Though this was begging the queſtion; yet it was the faireſt pretence which could be found. Huſs was accordingly informed, that his requeſt ſhould have been complied with, but the orders of holy church forbad.

While this affair was in agitation, the following event checked its progreſs.

John the twenty-third, from many ſymptoms at this time foreſeeing his fate, reſolved, if

if poſſible, to avoid it. He left Conſtance therefore in diſguiſe, and made towards Italy; flattering himſelf, that if he ſhould be able to reach Rome, he might ſtill contrive to baffle the council. But his hopes were too ſanguine. The emperor, having early notice of his flight, with a ſpeedy arm arreſted him near the alps. He was brought back to Conſtance; and from that time every appearance of power fell from him.—This event put a ſtop to the proſecution againſt Huſs; and his health afterwards growing better, it was for ſome time wholly laid aſide.

The Bohemian nobility having in vain made an application to the council, applied next to the emperor. That prince, when firſt informed of the impriſonment of Huſs, was greatly diſguſted at it. So notorious a breach of faith ſhocked the honeſty of his nature; and he ſent immediate orders to Conſtance, where he himſelf was not yet arrived, to have him inſtantly releaſed. But the fathers of the council ſoon removed his ſcruples; and he was, at the time of the pope's flight, ſo entirely devoted to their ſentiments, that he formally delivered Huſs into their hands. By them that unfortunate man

man was ſent to the caſtle of Gotleben, beyond the Rhine, where he was laden with fetters, and at night even chained to the floor:—to ſuch a determined height was the malice of his enemies at this time raiſed!

Nor was Huſs the ſingle object of their reſentment. Whoever in Conſtance was known to be of his party became immediately obnoxious. The populace were even mad with the prejudices of their leaders; had thoroughly imbibed their ſpirit, and turned it into fury: ſo that it became dangerous not only for Huſs's followers, but even for his favourers to appear in public. Seeing their preſence therefore ſerved only to exaſperate, the greater part of them withdrew from Conſtance, leaving their unfortunate leader to abide his fate.

In the mean time, his friends in Bohemia were ſufficiently active. The whole kingdom was in motion. Meſſengers were continually poſting from one province to another. It appeared as if ſome great revolution was approaching. At length a petition was ſent through the kingdom, and ſubſcribed by almoſt the whole body of the Bohemian nobility, and gentry. It was dated

dated in May 1415, and was addreſſed to the council of Conſtance. In this petition, having put the council in mind of the ſafe conduct, which had been granted to Huſs; and of their having, in an unprecedented manner, impriſoned him, before they had heard his defence; they begged a ſpeedy end might be put to his ſufferings, by allowing him an audience as ſoon as poſſible. The barons, who preſented this petition were anſwered in brief, that no injury had been done to their countryman; and that he ſhould very ſpeedily be examined.

Finding however that delays were ſtill made, they preſented a ſecond, and more explicit petition to the preſidents of the four nations: and not receiving an immediate anſwer, they preſented a third, in which they begged the releaſe of Huſs in very preſſing terms, and offered any ſecurity for his appearance.

The Bohemian nobility were too much in earneſt, and too inſtant to be wholly neglected. As careleſs an ear as poſſible had been thus far lent to their petitions. But their ardour was now too great to be eaſily checked. The patriarch of Antioch therefore,

fore, in anſwer to this laſt petition, made them a handſome ſpeech; and in civil language informed them, that no ſecurity could be taken; but that Huſs ſhould certainly be brought to a hearing in leſs than a week.

When they preſented this laſt petition to the council, they preſented another to the emperor; in which they preſſed upon him, with great earneſtneſs, his honour ſolemnly engaged for the ſecurity of Huſs; and implored his protection, and his intereſt with the council.

As the affair of the ſafe conduct, on which the aggravation of the injuries done to Huſs ſo greatly depends, is placed in different lights by proteſtant and popiſh writers, it may not be improper to enquire into the merits of it; and to lay before the reader the principal topics of the argument on both ſides of the queſtion.

In anſwer to the proteſtant's exclamations againſt ſo notorious a breach of faith, the papiſt thus apologizes.

"We allow, (ſays Mainburgh,) that Huſs obtained a ſafe conduct from the emperor: but for what end did he obtain it? Why, to defend his doctrine. If his doctrine was indefenſible,

indefenſible, his paſs was invalid. It was always, (ſays Roſweide, a jeſuit,) *ſuppoſed*, in the ſafe conduct, that juſtice ſhould have its courſe.—Beſides, (cry a number of apologizers) the emperor plainly exceeded his powers. By the canon-law he could not grant a paſs to an heretic; and by the decretals the council might annul any imperial act.—Nay farther, (ſays Morery,) if we examine the paſs, we ſhall find it, at beſt, a promiſe of ſecurity only till his arrival at Conſtance; or indeed rather a mere recommendation of him to the cities, through which he paſſed: ſo that, in fact, it was righteouſly fulfilled.

To all this the proteſtant thus replies. Be it granted, (which is, in truth, granting too much,) that the ſafe conduct implied a liberty only of defending his doctrine; yet it was violated, we find, before that liberty was given,—before that doctrine was condemned, or even examined.—And though the emperor might exceed his power in granting a paſs to an heretic, yet Huſs was at this time, only *ſuſpected* of hereſy. Nor was the imperial act annulled by the council, till after the paſs was violated.

lated. Huſs was condemned in the fifteenth ſeſſion, and the ſafe-conduct decreed invalid in the nineteenth.—With regard to the deficiency of the ſafe conduct, which is Morery's apology, it doth not appear, that it was ever an apology of ancient date. Huſs, it is certain, conſidered the ſafe-conduct, as a ſufficient ſecurity for his return home: and indeed ſo much is implied in the very nature of a ſafe-conduct. What title would that general deſerve, who ſhould invite his enemy into his quarters by a paſs, and then ſeize him? Reaſoning however apart, let us call in fact. *Omni prorſus impedimento remoto, tranſire, ſtare, morari, &* REDIRE *liberè permittatis ſibique et ſuis*, are the very words of the ſafe-conduct.

In concluſion therefore we cannot but judge the emperor to have been guilty of a moſt notorious breach of faith. The blame however is generally laid, and with ſome reaſon, upon the council, who directed his conſcience. What true ſon of the church would dare to oppoſe his private opinion againſt the unanimous voice of a general council?

On

On the firſt of June, the council had promiſed the Bohemian deputies, that Huſs ſhould be examined within the week. They ſaid *examined*; but they meant *condemned*. In the mean time, as if they had been ſuſpicious of their cauſe, all probable means were uſed to ſhake his reſolution, and make him retract: but his unaltered firmneſs gave them no hope of effecting their purpoſe.

On the fifth of June it was reſolved, that the articles objected to him, ſhould be produced, and in his abſence examined: when, after what they called a *fair hearing*, he ſhould be ſent for, and condemned.

There was attending the council, at that time, a public notary, whoſe name was Madonwitz. This man, whether ſtruck with the iniquity of their proceedings, or in his heart a favourer of Huſs, went immediately to the Bohemian deputies; and gave them a full information of the deſigns of the council. The deputies had no time to loſe. They demanded an inſtant audience of the emperor; and laid their complaints before him.

Sigiſmond was at leaſt a decent adverſary. The manners of a court had poliſhed away thoſe

thoſe rough edges of bigotry in him, which appeared ſo harſh in the cloyſtered churchman. He was greatly offended at the groſs proceedings of the council; and ſent them a very arbitrary meſſage to deſiſt. He would have nothing done, he told them, but with the defendant face to face. This meſſage had its effect; and Huſs was ſummoned to appear before them the next day.

The aſſembly was held in a large cloyſter belonging to the Franciſcans. Here a new ſcene, and of a very extraordinary kind, was preſented. The firſt article of the charge was ſcarce read, and a few witneſſes in a curſory manner examined, when, Huſs preparing to make his defence, the tumult began. Loud voices were heard from every quarter; a multitude of queſtions at the ſame inſtant aſked, every one ſpeaking, and no one heard, or heard but in one univerſal din of confuſion. From many parts even reproaches, and the moſt opprobrious language broke out.—Such, on this occaſion, was the behaviour of the famous council of Conſtance. No forum could produce more licentious inſtances of popular tumult. If an interval of leſs diſorder ſucceeded, and

Huſs

Huſs was about to offer any thing in his defence, he was immediately interrupted: "What avails this? What is that to the purpoſe?" No appearance of argument was brought againſt him.

Such aſtoniſhing licence moved, in ſome degree, the moſt diſpaſſionate of men. "In this place, (ſaid Huſs,) looking round him, I hoped to have found a different treatment." His rebuke increaſed the clamour; ſo that finding it vain to attempt any farther defence, he held his peace. This was matter of new triumph: "He was now confounded, ſilenced, by confeſſion guilty." Luther hath given us a ſtrong picture of this unruly aſſembly. "*Ibi omnes*, (ſaith he) *aprorum more fremere, ſetas à tergo erigere, frontem corrugare, denteſque acuere cæperunt.*"

There were ſome in that council, men of cooler temper, who foreſeeing the ill effects of ſuch violence, uſed what credit they had to check it. To divert the furious ſpirit, which had ſpread among thoſe zealots, and to throw in ſo much moderation among them, as to bring them to debate calmly, was at this time impoſſible. All that could be done, was, to get the buſineſs poſtponed

till another opportunity: which was at length, and with the utmoſt difficulty, effected.

The next morning they met again. They were hardly ſeated, when the emperor entered the council-chamber, and took his ſeat at the upper end of it. The diſorder of the aſſembly, the day before, had greatly diſguſted Sigiſmond; and he came now prepared to awe them into a more decent behaviour. His end was in part obtained. Mere decency was at leaſt obſerved.—It would be tedious to enter into a full detail of what paſſed upon this occaſion: what follows is a ſummary of it.

The examination was opened by Du Caſſis; the firſt article of which exhibited a charge againſt Huſs for denying the real preſence. This was proved by a Dominican, from a ſermon which Huſs had preached at Bethelem. He had only to anſwer, that he had always held the true catholic doctrine; which was a known truth among his friends; for he had ever believed tranſubſtantiation.

He was next charged in general with maintaining the pernicious errors of Wicliff. To this he anſwered, that he never had held

any

any error, which he knew to be ſuch; and that he deſired nothing more than to be convinced of what errors he might inadvertently have fallen into.—Wicliff's doctrine of tythes was objected to him; which, he owned, he knew not how to refute.—It was farther proved, that he had expreſſed himſelf againſt burning the books of Wicliff. To this he anſwered, that he had ſpoken againſt burning them in the manner practiſed by the late archbiſhop of Prague, who condemned them to the flames without examining them.—He was farther charged with ſaying, that he wiſhed his ſoul in the ſame place, where Wicliff's was. This expreſſion, he owned, he had made uſe of; which afforded matter of great mirth to his hearers.

The next article charged him with ſedition, in exciting the people to take arms againſt their ſovereign. But of this charge he entirely exculpated himſelf. Nothing indeed could be proved againſt him, but that in a ſermon, by no means temporizing, he had exhorted his hearers in the apoſtle's language, *to put on the whole armour of God.* This very frivolous charge gives us the moſt adequate idea of the malice of his enemies.

The next article accuſed him of forming diſſentions between the church and the ſtate; and of ruining the univerſity of Prague. The former part of the accuſation alluded to a diſpute between the pope and the king of Bohemia, which Huſs was ſaid, though unjuſtly to have fomented: the latter part to the affair of the Germans, which hath already been placed in its proper light.—An examination of Huſs on theſe few articles employed the firſt day.

The council riſing, he was carried back to priſon. As he paſſed by the cardinal of Cambray, who ſat near the emperor, the cardinal ſtopping him, ſaid, "I have been informed, you have heretofore boaſted, that unleſs you had choſen it yourſelf, neither the king of Bohemia, nor the emperor could have forced you to Conſtance." "My lord cardinal, (anſwered Huſs,) if I ſaid any thing of this kind, I ſaid it not in the ſtrong terms, in which it hath been repreſented to you. I might poſſibly ſpeak gratefully of the kindneſs of my friends in Bohemia." Upon this the baron de Clum, who never left him, with a noble firmneſs, told the cardinal, that if what he had heard had been ſaid, it was only

only the truth. "I am far from being, (ſaid he,) a perſon of the greateſt conſequence in my own country: others have ſtronger caſtles, and more power than I have; yet even I would have ventured to have defended this reverend father a whole year againſt the utmoſt efforts of both the princes you have mentioned."

The emperor then turning to Huſs, told him, that he had given him his ſafe-conduct, which he found was more than was well in his power, that he might have an opportunity to vindicate his character. "But depend upon it, (ſaid he) if you continue obſtinate, I will make a fire with my own hands, to burn you, rather than you ſhall eſcape."

To this zealous ſpeech Huſs anſwered, in few words, that he could not charge himſelf with holding any opinions obſtinately;—that he came thither with joy rather than reluctance; that if any better doctrine than his own could be laid before him in that learned aſſembly, he might ſee his error, and embrace the truth.—Having ſaid this, he was carried back to priſon.

His examination did not end here. He was called before the council again; and

many articles, not fewer than forty, were brought againſt him. The chief of them were extracted from his books; and ſome of them by very unfair deduction.

The following opinions, among many others, which gave offence were eſteemed moſt criminal.—"That there was no abſolute neceſſity for a viſible head of the church—that the church was better governed in apoſtolic times without one—that the title of holineſs was improperly given to man—that a wicked pope could not poſſibly be the vicar of Chriſt; that he denied the very authority on which he pretended to act—that liberty of conſcience was every ones natural right—that eccleſiaſtical cenſures, eſpecially ſuch as touched the life of man, had no foundation in ſcripture—that eccleſiaſtical obedience ſhould have its limits—that no excommunication ſhould deter the prieſt from his duty—that preaching was as much required from the miniſter of religion, as alms-giving from the man of ability; and that neither of them could hide his talent in the earth without incurring the divine diſpleaſure."—Paletz and the cardinal of Cambray were the chief managers of this examination.

Beſides

Beſides theſe opinions, moſt of which were proved and acknowledged, he threw out many things in the courſe of his examination, which were eagerly laid hold on; particularly againſt the ſcandalous lives of the clergy of every denomination; the open ſymony practiſed among them, their luxury, lewdneſs, and ignorance.

Huſs having now been examined on all thoſe articles, which the niceſt ſcrutiny into his books, and the moſt exact remembrance of his words, could furniſh, the cardinal of Cambray thus accoſted him. "Your guilt hath now been laid before this auguſt aſſembly with its full force of evidence. I am obliged therefore to take upon me the diſagreeable taſk of informing you, that only this alternative is offered to you: either to abjure theſe damnable errors, and ſubmit yourſelf to the council; in which caſe theſe reverend fathers will deal as gently with you as poſſible: or to abide the ſevere conſequence of an obſtinate adherence to them." To this Huſs anſwered, that he had nothing to ſay, but what he had often ſaid before; that he came there not to defend any opinion obſtinately; but with an

earneſt deſire to ſee his errors, and to amend them;—that many opinions had been laid to his charge, ſome of which he had never maintained, and others, which he had maintained, were not yet confuted;—that as in the firſt caſe, he thought it abſurd to abjure opinions which were never his; ſo in the ſecond, he was determined to ſubſcribe nothing againſt his conſcience."

The emperor told him, he ſaw no difficulty in his renouncing errors, which he had never held. "For myſelf, ſaid he, I am, at this moment, ready to renounce every hereſy, that hath ever exiſted in the Chriſtian church: does it therefore follow that I have been an heretic?"

Huſs reſpectfully made a diſtinction between abjuring errors in general; and abjuring errors which had been falſely imputed: and prayed the council to hear him upon theſe points, which to them appeared erroneous; were it only to convince them that he had ſomething to ſay for the opinions he maintained. To this requeſt however the council paid no attention.

Here Paletz and De Caſſis took an opportunity to exculpate themſelves of any appear-

ance

ance of malice in this disagreeable prosecution. They both entered upon the task with great unwillingness; and had done nothing but what their duty required. To this the cardinal of Cambray added, that he could sufficiently exculpate them on that head. They had behaved, he said, with great humanity; and to his knowledge might have acted a much severer part.

The emperor observing, that every thing, which the cause would bear, had now been offered, arose from his seat, and thus addressed himself to the council.

"You have now heard, reverend fathers, an ample detail of heresies, not only proved, but confessed; each of which unquestionably, in my judgment, deserveth death. If therefore the heretic continueth obstinate in the maintenance of his opinions, he must certainly die. And if he should even abjure them, I should by no means think it proper to send him again into Bohemia; where new opportunities would give him new spirits, and raise a second commotion worse than the first.—As to the fate however of this unhappy man, be that as it may hereafter be determined; at present, let me only

only add, that an authentic copy of the condemned articles ſhould be ſent into Bohemia, as a ground-work for the clergy there to proceed on; that hereſy may at length be rooted up, and peace reſtored to that diſtracted country."

The emperor having finiſhed his ſpeech, it was agreed in the council to allow Huſs a month longer to give in his final anſwer. With the utmoſt difficulty he had ſupported himſelf through this ſevere trial. Beſides the malice of his enemies, he had upon him the paroxiſm of a very violent diſorder. On this laſt day he was ſcarce able to walk, when he was led from the council. His conſolation in theſe circumſtances was a cold and hungry dungeon, into which he was inhumanly thruſt.

His friend, the baron, attended him even hither, and with every inſtance of endearing tenderneſs, endeavoured to ſupport him. The ſuffering martyr wrung his hand; and looking round the horrid ſcene, earneſtly cried out, "Good God! this is friendſhip indeed!" His keepers ſoon after put him in irons; and none but ſuch as were licenſed by the council, were allowed to ſee him.

The

The generous nature of Sigiſmond, tho' he was not unverſed in the artifices of the cabinet, abhorred a practiſed fraud. The affair of Huſs, amidſt all the caſuiſtry of the council, gave him keen diſtreſs; and he wiſhed for nothing more ardently, than to rid his hands of it with honour.—On the other ſide, his vanity and his intereſt engaged him to appear the defender of the catholic cauſe in Germany. If he ſuffered Huſs to be put to death one part of the world would queſtion his honour; if he interfered with a high hand in preſerving him, the other part would queſtion his religion. The perplexity was great; from which he thought nothing could relieve him, but the recantation of Huſs.

To obtain this, he tried every mean in his power. He had already endeavoured to intimidate him with high language, which he had uſed, both in the council, and in other places. But this was ineffectual. He had now recourſe to ſoothing arts. The form of a recantation was offered; in which Huſs was required only to renounce thoſe hereſies, which had been fairly proved. But he continued ſtill inflexible. Several deputations were

were afterwards ſent to him in priſon; and biſhops, cardinals, and princes in vain tried their eloquence to perſuade him.

Sigiſmond ſeeing the concluſion to which this fatal affair was approaching, might probably have intereſted himſelf thus far, as thinking he had been too condeſcending to the council. The flame alſo, which he ſaw kindling in Bohemia, where he had high expectations, and was willing to preſerve an intereſt, might alarm him greatly. He had gone too far however to recede; and knew not how to take Huſs out of the hands of the council; into which he had given him with ſo much zeal and devotion.

In the mean time Huſs remained maſter of his fate; and ſhewed a conſtancy which ſcarce any age hath excelled. He amuſed himſelf, while it was permitted, with writing letters to his friends, which were privately conveyed by the Bohemian lords, who viſited him in priſon. Many of theſe letters are ſtill extant. The following which is the ſubſtance of one of them, may be a teſt of that compoſed piety and rational frame of mind, which ſupported him in all his ſufferings.

"My

"My dear friends, let me take this laſt opportunity of exhorting you to truſt in nothing here, but to give yourſelves up entirely to the ſervice of God. Well am I authorized to warn you not to truſt in princes, nor in any child of man, for there is no help in them. God only remaineth ſtedfaſt. What *he* promiſeth, he will undoubtedly perform. For myſelf, on his gracious promiſe I reſt. Having endeavoured to be his faithful ſervant, I fear not being deſerted by him. Where I am, ſays the gracious promiſer, there ſhall my ſervant be. May the God of heaven preſerve you!—This is probably the laſt letter I ſhall be enabled to write. I have reaſon to believe I ſhall be called upon to morrow to anſwer with my life.—Sigiſmond hath in all things acted deceitfully.—I pray God forgive him! You have heard in what ſevere language he hath ſpoken of me."

The month, which had been allowed by the council, being now expired, a deputation of four biſhops came to receive his laſt anſwer, which was given in the ſame language as before.

The

The ſixth of July was appointed for his condemnation; the ſcene of which was opened with extraordinary pomp. In the morning of that day, the biſhops and temporal lords of the council, each in his robes, aſſembled in the great church at Conſtance. The emperor preſided in a chair of ſtate. When all were ſeated, Huſs was brought in by a guard. In the middle of the church, a ſcaffold had been erected; near which a table was placed, covered with the veſtments of a Romiſh prieſt.

After a ſermon, in which the preacher earneſtly exhorted his hearers to *cut off the man of ſin*, the proceedings began. The articles alledged againſt him were read aloud; as well thoſe, which he had, as thoſe which he had not allowed. This treatment Huſs oppoſed greatly; and would gladly, for his character's ſake, have made a diſtinction: but finding all endeavours of this kind ineffectual, and being indeed plainly told by the cardinal of Cambray, that no farther opportunity of anſwering for himſelf ſhould be allowed, he deſiſted; and falling on his knees, in a pathetic ejaculation, commended his cauſe to Chriſt.

The

The articles againſt him, as form required, having been recited, the ſentence of his condemnation was read. The inſtrument is tedious: in ſubſtance it runs, "That John Huſs, being a diſciple of Wicliff of damnable memory, whoſe life he had defended, and whoſe doctrines he had maintained, is adjudged by the council of Conſtance (his tenets having been firſt condemned) to be an obſtinate heretic; and as ſuch, to be degraded from the office of a prieſt; and cut off from the holy church."

His ſentence having been thus pronounced, he was ordered to put on the prieſt's veſtments, and aſcend the ſcaffold, according to form, where he might ſpeak to the people; and, it was hoped, might ſtill have the grace to retract his errors. But Huſs contented himſelf with ſaying once more, that he knew of no errors, which he had to retract; that none had been proved upon him; and that he would not injure the doctrine he had taught, nor the conſciences of thoſe who had heard him, by aſcribing to himſelf errors, of which he had never been convinced.

When

When he came down from the ſcaffold, he was received by ſeven biſhops, who were commiſſioned to degrade him. The ceremonies of this buſineſs exhibited a very unchriſtian ſcene. The biſhops forming a circle round him, each adding a curſe took off a part of his attire. When they had thus ſtripped him of his ſacerdotal veſtments, they proceeded to eraſe his tonſure, which they did by clipping it into the form of a croſs. Some writers ſay, that in doing this, they even tore and mangled his head; but ſuch ſtories are unqueſtionably the exaggeration of proteſtant zeal. Their laſt act was to adorn him with a large paper cap; on which, various, and horrid forms of devils were painted. This cap one of the biſhops put upon his head; with this unchriſtian ſpeech, "Hereby we commit thy ſoul to the devil." Huſs ſmiling, obſerved, "It was leſs painful than a crown of thorns".

The ceremony of his degradation being thus over, the biſhops preſented him to the emperor. They had now done, they told him, all the church allowed. What remained was of civil authority. Sigiſmond ordered the duke of Bavaria to receive him, who

who immediately gave him into the hands of an officer. This perſon had orders to ſee him burned, with every thing he had about him.

At the gate of the church a guard of 800 men waited to conduct him to the place of execution. He was carried firſt to the gate of the epiſcopal palace; where a pile of wood being kindled, his books were burned before his face. Huſs ſmiled at the indignity.

When he came to the ſtake, he was allowed ſome time for devotion; which he performed in ſo animated a manner, that many of the ſpectators, who came there ſufficiently prejudiced againſt him, cried out, "What this man hath ſaid within doors we know not, but ſurely he prayeth like a Chriſtian."

As he was preparing for the ſtake, he was aſked whether he choſe a confeſſor? He anſwered in the affirmative; and a prieſt was called. The deſign was to draw from him a retractation, without which, the prieſt ſaid, he durſt not confeſs him. "If that be your reſolution, ſaid Huſs, I muſt die without confeſſion: I truſt in God, I have no mortal ſin to anſwer for."

He was then tied to the ſtake with wet cords, and faſtened by a chain round his body. As the executioners were beginning to pile the faggots around him, a voice from the croud was heard, "Turn him from the eaſt; turn him from the eaſt." It ſeemed like a voice from heaven. They who conducted the execution, ſtruck at once with the impropriety, or rather prophaneneſs of what they had done, gave immediate orders to have him turned due weſt.

Before fire was brought, the duke of Bavaria rode up, and exhorted him once more to retract his errors. But he ſtill continued firm. "I have no errors, ſaid he, to retract: I endeavoured to preach Chriſt with apoſtolic plainneſs; and I am now prepared to ſeal my doctrine with my blood."

The faggots being lighted, he recommended himſelf into the hands of God, and began a hymn, which he continued ſinging, till the wind drove the flame and ſmoke into his face. For ſometime he was inviſible. When the rage of the fire abated, his body half conſumed appeared hanging over the chain; which together with the poſt, were thrown down, and a new pile heaped over them.

them. The malice of his enemies purſued his very remains. His aſhes were gathered up, and ſcattered in the Rhine; that the very earth might not feel the load of ſuch enormous guilt.

From this view of the life and ſufferings of Huſs, it is hard to ſay what were the real grounds of the animoſity he had raiſed. His creed unqueſtionably was far from being exactly orthodox; yet it is plain how very ill able his adverſaries were to gather from it offenſive matter enough for an accuſation. He believed tranſubſtantiation; he allowed the adoration of ſaints; he practiſed confeſſion; he ſpoke cautiouſly of tradition, and reverently of the ſeven ſacraments; and whatever latitude he might give himſelf on any of theſe articles, it was not more than had been often taken, inoffenſively taken, by Gerſon, Zabarelle, and other ſpirited divines of the Roman church.

Beſides, the great pains the council took to avoid a public queſtion, and the great confidence with which Huſs deſired one, are preſumptions very ſtrong in his favour.

It is the opinion of Lenfant, that the great cauſe of his condemnation was his in-

troducing Wicliff's doctrine into Bohemia; and chiefly perhaps that offenſive part of it, which ſtruck at the temporalities of the clergy. And indeed this is extremely probable from the whole conduct of the council; for though it is apparent, that he never adopted the entire ſyſtem of that reformer; yet his principles, it is certain, would have led him much farther, than they had hitherto done: and the fathers of the council being aware of this, ſeem to have determined, though at the expence of juſtice, to cruſh an evil in its origin, which appeared teeming with ſo much miſchief.

Beſides this, there ſeems to have been another cauſe for that unabated prejudice, which ran ſo high againſt him. The warmth, with which he treated the corruptions of the clergy, and the uſurpations of the church of Rome, was a crime never to be forgiven by the eccleſiaſtics of thoſe times; and added the keeneſt edge to their reſentment.—But as this was an unpopular cauſe to appear in, it is plain they wanted to have it believed their reſentment aroſe upon another account. This ſeems to have been the foundation of a ſpeech, attributed by Varillas to cardinal Perron;

Perron; "My learned friends, (he would ſay, you cannot employ your time worſe, than in giving the world any account of the affairs of Huſs."

His LIFE however was the ſevereſt ſatyr upon the clergy. It was a mirror, which reflected their diſtorted features. In him they ſaw the true eccleſiaſtic, and the real chriſtian,—characters ſo different from their own. Gentle and condeſcending to the opinions of others, this amiable pattern of virtue was ſtrict only in his own principles. The opinions indeed of men were leſs his concern than their practice. His great conteſt was with vice; and he treated the miniſters of religion with freedom, only as he thought their example encouraged, rather than checked, that licence, which prevailed. The great lines in his character were piety, and fortitude. His piety was calm, rational, and manly: his fortitude nothing human could daunt. The former was free from enthuſiaſm; the latter from weakneſs. He was in every reſpect an apoſtolical man. "From his infancy, (ſays the univerſity of Prague, in a voluntary teſtimonial) he was of ſuch

excellent morals, that during his ſtay here, we may venture to challenge any one to produce a ſingle fault againſt him.

As to his parts and acquirements, he ſeems to have been above mediocrity; and yet not in the higheſt form, in reſpect of either. A vein of good ſenſe runs through all his writings; but their diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics are ſimplicity and piety. In one of Luther's pieces we have the following teſtimony in their favour. "In a monaſtic library, (ſays that reformer,) a volume of Huſs's writings fell in my way; which I ſeized with great eagerneſs, ſurpriſed that ſuch a book had eſcaped the flames, and deſirous to know ſomething of the opinions of that hereſiarch. But who can expreſs my aſtoniſhment, when I found him by many degrees the moſt rational expounder of ſcripture I had ever met with. I could not help crying out, What could occaſion the ſeverity with which this man was treated! yet as the name of Huſs was ſo deteſtable; and as a favourable opinion of him was ſo utterly inconſiſtent with a Chriſtian's faith, I ſhut the book, and could find comfort only

in

in this thought, that perhaps he wrote these things before his fall; for I was yet ignorant of what had passed at the council of Constance."

To preserve the memory of this excellent man, the sixth of July was, for many years, held sacred among the Bohemians. A service, adapted to the day, was appointed to be read in all churches; and instead of a sermon, an oration was spoken in commendation of their martyr, in which the noble stand he made against ecclesiastical tyranny was commemorated; and his example proposed as a pattern to all Christians.

In some places large fires were lighted in the evening, upon the mountains, to preserve the memory of his sufferings; round which the country-people would assemble, and sing hymns in his praise.

A very remarkable medal was struck in honour of him, on which was represented his effigies, with this inscription, CENTUM REVOLUTIS ANNIS DEO RESPONDEBITIS ET MIHI. These words are said to have been spoken by him to his adversaries, a little before his execution; and were afterwards

wards applied by the zealots of his ſect, as prophetic of Luther; who lived about an hundred years after him. The ſtory carries with it an air of irrational zeal; and ſeems calculated only for the credulous.

The END.

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THE

LIFE

OF

JEROME of PRAGUE.

WE find very little relating to the early part of the life of this reformer. As he was a zealous follower of Huſs, and united with him in all his ſchemes; the actions, in which they were jointly engaged, are aſcribed by hiſtorians to Huſs, as the more eminent leader. In general however, we find his youth ſpent in an eager purſuit of knowledge; which he ſought after in all the more conſiderable univerſities of Europe; particularly in thoſe of Prague, Paris, Heidelburgh, Cologn, and Oxford.

At

At Oxford, which ſeems to have been the laſt ſeat of learning, which he viſited, he became acquainted with the works of Wicliff; and being a perſon of uncommon application, he tranſlated many of them into his native language; having with great pains made himſelf maſter of the Engliſh.

It is probable he had conceived an eſteem for Wicliff, before he went to Oxford. At his return to Prague, he profeſſed himſelf an open favourer of him; and finding his doctrines had made a conſiderable progreſs in Bohemia, and that Huſs was at the head of that party, which had eſpouſed them, he attached himſelf to that leader.

Huſs was glad of ſo able an aſſiſtant in his great work of reforming the clergy: for Jerome was inferior to none of his time, in point either of abilities, or learning;—ſuperior certainly to his maſter in both. Huſs was however better qualified as the leader of a party; his gentleneſs, and very perſuaſive manner conciliating the minds of men in his favour: whereas Jerome, with all his great and good qualities, wanted temper.

Of this we have ſome inſtances; one indeed very flagrant. He was diſputing with

two

two monks about reliques, whom he accidentally met on the banks of the Muldaw; and finding himſelf more warmly oppoſed than he expected, he ſeized one of them by the middle, and threw him into the river. The monk recovered the ſhore; but was in no condition to purſue his argument. So Jerome triumphed by the ſtrength of his arm. Whether this ſtory be a fact, as indeed Lenfant ſpeaks very dubiouſly of the truth of it, we have however no reaſon to doubt, that Jerome was not principally concerned in thoſe paſſionate doings, which have been mentioned in the life of Huſs.

We find little more recorded of Jerome, till the time of the council of Conſtance. When Huſs went thither, Jerome, we are told, very pathetically exhorted him to bear up firmly in this great trial; and in particular to inſiſt ſtrenuouſly upon the corrupt ſtate of the clergy; and the neceſſity of a reformation. He added, that if he ſhould hear in Bohemia, that Huſs was overpowered by his adverſaries, he would immediately repair to Conſtance; and lend him what aſſiſtance he was able.

He

He promiſed only what he fully intended. He no ſooner heard of the difficulties, in which his maſter was engaged, than he ſet out for Conſtance; notwithſtanding Huſs wrote very preſſing letters, inſiſting upon his putting off the deſign, as dangerous, and unprofitable.

He arrived at Conſtance, on the 4th of April, 1415; about three months before the death of Huſs. He entered the town privately; and conſulting with ſome of the leaders of his party; whom he found there, he was eaſily convinced, that he could be of no ſervice to his friend: he found the council would not ſo much as give him an hearing; and that open violence was the only argument they uſed. He heard likewiſe, that his arrival at Conſtance had taken air; and that the council intended to ſeize him.

As this was the ſituation of things, he thought it prudent to retire. Accordingly the next day he went to Iberling, an imperial town about a mile from Conſtance; whether he fled, ſays Reichenthal, with ſuch precipitation, that he left his ſword behind him. Reichenthal was an officer, em-

ployed

ployed by the council, to give an account of all ſtrangers, who came to Conſtance.

From Iberling Jerome wrote to the emperor, and profeſſed his readineſs to appear before the council, if that prince would give him a ſafe-conduct. But Sigiſmond had the honeſty to refuſe. Jerome then tried the council; but could obtain no favourable anſwer.

In this perplexity he put up papers in all the public places of Conſtance, particularly upon the doors of the cardinals houſes, in which he profeſſed his readineſs to appear at Conſtance, in the defence of his character, and doctrine, both which he heard had been exceedingly defamed; and declared, that if any error ſhould be proved againſt him, he would with great readineſs retract it; begging only that the faith of the council might be given for his ſecurity.

Theſe papers obtaining no anſwer, he ſet out upon his return to Bohemia. He had the precaution to carry with him a certificate ſigned by ſeveral of the Bohemian nobility then at Conſtance, teſtifying, that he had uſed all prudent means in his power to procure a hearing.

But

But he did not thus escape. At Hirsaw he was seized by an officer of the duke of Sultzbach; who though he acted unauthorized, made little doubt of the council's thanks for so acceptable a service.

Reichanthal hath given us a more particular account of this matter. "At a village upon the borders of the black forest, (saith that strenuous defender of the council,) Jerome fell accidentally in company with some priests. The conversation turning upon the council of Constance, Jerome grew warm; and among other severe things, called that assembly the *school of the devil*, and *a synagogue of iniquity*. The priests, scandalized at this language, gave immediate information of it to the chief magistrates of the place, who arrested Jerome, and put him into the hands of the duke of Sultzbach."—This story hath by no means an improbable air; as it is rather characteristic; though Lenfant treats it as a fable.

The duke of Sultzbach, having gotten Jerome in his power, wrote to the council for directions. The council expressing their obligations to the duke, desired him to send his prisoner immediately to Constance.

ſtance. The elector-palatine met him, and conducted him in triumph into the town; himſelf riding on horſe-back, with a numerous retinue, who led Jerome, in fetters, by a long chain, after him.

He was brought immediately before the council. Here a citation was read to him; which, it was ſaid, had been poſted up in Conſtance, in anſwer to the papers, which he had ſent from Iberling; and he was queſtioned about his precipitate flight from that town. To this he anſwered, that he had waited a reaſonable time for an anſwer to his paper; but had never heard of any ſuch anſwer till that moment. He added, that if he had heard of it, he would have returned to Conſtance, though he had been upon the confines of Bohemia.

Great was the clamour which enſued on this declaration. So eager was every mouth to open upon him, that the impartial ſpectator ſaw rather the repreſentation of the baiting of a wild beaſt, than a wiſe aſſembly enquiring after truth. Nothing indeed more diſgraceth the popiſh cauſe, than the groſs indecency, which, in a manner was authorized

thorized on theſe ſolemn occaſions. A good cauſe hath never recourſe to tumult.

Among thoſe, who clamoured loudeſt againſt Jerome, we find a perſon, whom we are unwilling to ſee mixing in ſuch a ſcene of diſorder;—John Gerſon, chancellor of the univerſity of Paris, one of the moſt learned, as well as the moſt knowing men of his time, but without that candour which uſually attends knowledge. With great acrimony he reproached Jerome for the novel opinions he had introduced in Paris, while he ſtudied there. Jerome anſwered with equal ſpirit, that it was hard to object opinions of ſo long a date;—that it was well known the diſputations of young ſtudents were meant rather as the exerciſe of genius, than as ſtrict diſquiſitions of truth;—that no exceptions at the time, had been made to the opinions, which he had maintained;—ſo far from it, that he had been honoured with a degree;—but that however, if the chancellor would make his objections, he would be ready either to defend or retract what he had ſaid.

As the chancellor was about to reply, an inundation of furious language broke in upon

upon their diſcourſe. The rectors particularly of the univerſities of Cologn, and Heidelburgh, following the track of Gerſon, made lamentable complaints of the peſtilent hereſies which Jerome had maintained in thoſe places; one of them in particular dwelt much upon an impious idea he had given of the Trinity, comparing it to water, ſnow and ice. Jerome had no opportunity of anſwering. A thouſand voices burſt out from every quarter, "Away with him: burn him: burn him."

This confuſion continued nearly the ſpace of half an hour. Jerome ſtood amazed at the groſs indecency of the ſcene. As ſoon as he had collected himſelf, and could in any degree be heard, he looked round the aſſembly with a noble air, and cried out aloud, "Since nothing can ſatisfy you but my blood, God's will be done!"

Thus ended his firſt hearing. He was carried from the aſſembly into a dungeon, under the cuſtody of a guard, till it could be determined how to diſpoſe of him.

As he was ſitting here, ruminating upon his approaching fate, a voice ſtruck him, calling out in theſe words, "Fear not,

Jerome, to die in the cauſe of that truth, which during thy life, thou haſt defended." Jerome looking up to a dark window, from whence the voice ſeemed to come, cried out, "Whoever thou art, who deigneſt to comfort an abject man, I give thee thanks for thy kind office. I have indeed lived defending what I thought the truth: the harder taſk yet remains, to die for its ſake: but God, I hope, will ſupport me againſt fleſh and blood."

This converſation alarmed the guard, who ruſhing in diſcovered the offender. He appeared to be that Maddonwitz, whoſe ſervices to Huſs have already been mentioned.

The affair was uſed as a pretence for more ſeverity againſt Jerome, who was immediately conveyed to a ſtrong tower, where his hands being tied behind his neck, he was left to languiſh, we are told, in that painful poſture, during the ſpace of two days, without any aliment, but bread and water.

Theſe ſeverities, and others, which were inflicted upon him, were intended to force a recantation from him; a point which the council exceedingly laboured. Nothing, in the way either of promiſing or threatening,

was

was omitted, which it was thought, might be effectual to that end.

His confinement brought upon him a dangerous illneſs; in the courſe of which he ſent preſſing inſtances to the council for a confeſſor. This afforded a proper occaſion to work upon him; and he was given to underſtand, upon what terms he might be gratified. But he remained immoveable.

The next attempt upon him, was immediately after the death of Huſs. The circumſtances of that affair were laid before him, and the fatal example preſſed home in the moſt affecting manner. Jerome liſtened without emotion; and anſwered in ſuch reſolute language, as afforded little hopes of his ſudden converſion.

His conſtancy, however, at length gave way. Fleſh and blood could not ſupport him longer. The ſimple fear of death he withſtood; but to endure impriſonment, chains, hunger, ſickneſs, and even torture, through a ſucceſſion of many months, was too great a trial for human nature. But though he fell in this conflict, yet he fell not, till he had made a noble ſtand. He

was three times brought before the council; and having as often withſtood the fury of intemperate zeal, retired maſter of himſelf, to the horrors of his dungeon.

On the eleventh of September his judges firſt had hopes of his recantation. He began to waver; and talked obſcurely of his having miſunderſtood the tendency of ſome of the tenets of Huſs. Promiſes and threatenings were now redoubled upon him; and the twentieth was appointed for a more ample conceſſion of his hereſies. He was ſounded the night before; but not being yet brought to a proper flexibility, another day was appointed. That fatal day was the twenty-third of September; when he read aloud an ample recantation, of all the opinions he had maintained, couched in words directed by the council. In this paper he acknowledged the errors of Wicliff, and of Huſs, entirely aſſented to the condemnation of the latter, and declared himſelf, in every article, a firm believer with the church of Rome.

Having thus acted againſt his conſcience, with a heavy heart he retired from the council. His chains were taken from him; but the load was only transferred from his body

body to his mind. Vain were the careſſes of thoſe about him: they only mocked his ſorrow. His priſon was now indeed a gloomy ſolitude. The anguiſh of his own thoughts had made it ſuch.

Paletz, and Du Caſſis, who were the chief managers againſt him, as they had been againſt Huſs, ſoon obſerved this change. His recantation, they ſaid publickly, came only from his lips; and they determined, to bring him to a ſecond hearing. It is probable they acted in this buſineſs only an under-part. The pretence for a new trial was a new accuſation; ſome Carmelite friars, juſt arrived from Bohemia, having laid before the council many ſtrong articles againſt Jerome, which had not yet appeared. Paletz taking up the affair, ſeconded the Carmelites with great zeal: others again, as the ſcheme had been laid, harangued on different articles.

The managers however of this buſineſs ſoon found, they were likely to meet with a warmer oppoſition than they had imagined. The cardinals particularly of Cambray and Florence, and others, who had been appointed judges by the council in the cauſe of

Jerome, exclaimed loudly againſt a ſecond trial. "He hath ſubmitted, (ſaid they) to the council; — he hath acknowledged his errors in particular, as well as in general, what can we expect more? Hitherto we have acted with credit: let us ſtop here, and not ſuffer an intemperate zeal for truth to carry us beyond the bounds of juſtice."

Whether the love of juſtice was the only motive with theſe cardinals may be queſtioned. It is probable they were influenced by motives of policy alſo. The death of Huſs had occaſioned a greater commotion in Bohemia than had been foreſeen. Nothing was heard in the ſtreets of Prague, but clamour againſt the council, which was every where repreſented as an aſſembly of perſecutors. The council, it ſeems, had written a letter, in very ſmooth language, to palliate the affair of Huſs: but it had little effect. On the contrary, the principal Huſſites, (for by that name the party became now diſtinguiſhed,) aſſembled in the church of Bethelem, where they decreed the honour of martyrdom to their maſter. They went farther: they ſent a letter to Conſtance; in which, having given ample

ample teſtimony to the merits of Huſs, they reproached the council with his death; expreſſing at the ſame time their devotion to the ſee of Rome, when the confuſion, with which it was diſtracted, ſhould be at an end. This letter was ſigned by fifty four of the firſt nobility in Bohemia, and Moravia: ſome Poliſh lords too ſubſcribed it. Nor was it thought that Winceſlaus himſelf, though no way attached to the cauſe of Huſs, had interfered in checking the diſturbance occaſioned by his death. It is certain, he had taken great offence at the council for the affront, which he thought they had put upon him; and wanted only an opportunity of ſhewing them how much he was offended.

From the determined ſpirit of this letter, it was eaſy to obſerve the ſeeds of fire ſcattered in Bohemia, which a ſingle breath might excite into flame; and how general this conflagration might become, it was impoſſible to foreſee. All well-wiſhers therefore to the peace of Chriſtendom, thought it prudent to refrain from counſels of an inflammatory kind.

Among theſe, it is probable, were the cardinals juſt mentioned; who laboured,

with what addreſs they were able, to prevent a ſecond trial. But their endeavours were ineffectual. A torrent of zeal and bigotry bore down all oppoſition. Even the learned Gerſon joined in this unmanly clamour; and with great indecency employed his pen, as well as his tongue, upon the occaſion. A treatiſe of his was made public, in which he ſhewed how little ſtreſs could be laid upon the recantation of heretics. To ſuch an height ran diſſention on this occaſion, that the cardinal of Cambray was even reproached in publick, with having taken money from the king of Bohemia.

He, and his colleagues, finding themſelves unable to ſtem ſo furious a tide, at length gave way to it. They entered their proteſt however againſt theſe violent proceedings, and laid down the commiſſion, with which the council had intruſted them. It was immediately taken up, with the general approbation of all the zealot-party, by the patriarch of Conſtantinople; who having ſufficiently ſhewn his ſpirit in the affair of Huſs, was conſidered as a man prepared to go any lengths.

While

While theſe things were in agitation, a full half-year elapſed; during which time Jerome's enemies had influence enough to continue his confinement, till ſome end ſhould be put to the affair.

It was not till the May of the year 1416, that Jerome was called again before the council. He had long been apprized of the deſign of bringing him to a ſecond trial, upon ſome new evidence which had appeared. This, amidſt all his diſtreſſes, was his great conſolation; and he rejoyced at an opportunity of acknowledging publickly that ſhameful defection, which hung ſo heavy upon him.

A little before the day of trial, he was informed, that proctors were appointed, by whom he might urge his defence. But he inſiſted poſitively upon making no defence in any form, unleſs the council would give him an audience; and let him anſwer for himſelf. This after much difficulty, and long debating, was at length allowed.

When he was brought to an audience, he was charged with various articles; the chief of which were,—His adherence to the errors of Wicliff,—his having had a picture of that heretic

heretic in his chamber, arrayed in the common ornaments of a ſaint,—his counterfeiting the ſeal of the univerſity of Oxford in favour of Wicliff,—His deſpiſing the authority of the church after excommunication,—and his denial of tranſubſtantiation.

On all theſe articles of accuſation, and what others of leſs moment were objected to him, he anſwered with great ſpirit. "That he thought well of Wicliff, and of his doctrine, he ſaid, he ſcrupled not to own; but that he thought him infallible, as ſeemed to be inſinuated, was falſe; — that many of his books he had never ſeen; and that he could not ſubſcribe in all points to thoſe he had; but that in general he believed many errors had been laid to his charge, of which he was innocent; for he was too wiſe a man, he ſaid, to be the author of groſs abſurdities, many of which his enemies had inſerted in his creed. —With regard to his having had a picture of Wicliff in his poſſeſſion, he ſaid, it was very true; and that he had the pictures likewiſe of many other learned men; but he remembred not, he ſaid, that Wicliff's portrait was dreſſed in any ſaint-like ornaments; — that as to the charge

charge of his having counterfeited the ſeal of the univerſity of Oxford, he had ſeen, he ſaid, a teſtimonial under that ſeal, in favour of Wicliff, which he had been made to believe was authentic: he owned too, that he had read it publickly; but that as to his having counterfeited either the ſeal, or the inſtrument, he was totally innocent of the charge; and it reſted upon his opponents to prove the allegation. This affair of a falſe teſtimonial made much noiſe, it ſeems, at that time. But from the general temper of the univerſity it is probable, the inſtrument was authentic; and the evidence of hiſtory confirms its authenticity.—Finally, Jerome declared ſolemnly, that he had never deſpiſed the authority of the church: he could prove, he ſaid, that he had uſed every probable method in his power to be reconciled to it;—and that laſtly, he had never, either in converſation, or writing, oppoſed the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation.

Having thus proteſted his innocence, he gave the council a circumſtantial detail of his coming to Conſtance; and of all that had ſince befallen him. Then raiſing his voice, and expreſſing himſelf firſt with ſome aſperity

aſperity againſt his accuſers, he told them, he was now going to lay himſelf more open to them, than he had yet done. He then, with great emotion, declared before the whole aſſembly, that the fear of death only had induced him to retract opinions, which from his heart he maintained;—that he had done injuſtice to the memory of thoſe two excellent men, John Wicliff, and John Huſs; whoſe examples he revered; and in whoſe doctrine he was determined to die. He concluded with a ſevere invective againſt the clergy; the depravity of whoſe manners, he ſaid, was now every where notorious.

It may truly be lamented, that the whole of his ſpeech, on this occaſion, hath not been preſerved. It is ſaid to have been a model of true eloquence. The minds of his hearers were ſo captivated with it, that, in ſpite of themſelves, they were attentive. Once or twice he was interrupted; but the interrupters paid ſeverely for their impertinence: they were ſoon laſhed into confuſion by the acrimony of his language, and the ſpirit, with which he ſpoke. So collected was he, ſo entirely maſter of himſelf, and of every topic, on which he diſcourſed, that

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it ſeemed as if heaven had indulged him on this ſolemn occaſion, in the exertion of more than natural powers. It is ſaid, that many in the council, while he was ſpeaking, became ſo prejudiced in his favour, that they ſat with a dread upon them, leſt he ſhould utter ſomething, which might throw him beyond a poſſibility of obtaining mercy.

His ſpeech however was not calculated to move pity. On the ſame day, or a few days after ſentence paſſed upon him, by which he was condemned for having held the errors of Wicliff; and for apoſtatizing. He was immediately, in the uſual ſtyle of popiſh affectation, delivered over to the civil power. As he was a layman, he had no ceremony of degradation to undergo. The ſame ſort of cap was put upon his head, with which Huſs had been adorned; and ſo attired he was led to execution.

When he came to the place, he could not but ſmile to ſee the malice of his enemies appearing in a ſhape too groteſque for ſo ſerious an occaſion. The poſt, to which he was chained, was hewen, it ſeems, into a monſtrous, and uncouth figure of Huſs, and ornamented into a ridiculous likeneſs of him.

A little

A little before the fire was kindled, he told the people, that he believed the eſtabliſhed creed, and that he knew not for what he ſuffered death, unleſs becauſe he had not ſubſcribed to the condemnation of Wicliff, and of Huſs; which he could not do with a ſafe conſcience; becauſe he firmly believed them both to be pious men.

The wood beginning to blaze, he ſang an hymn, which he continued with great fervency, till the fury of the fire ſcorching him, he was heard to cry out, "O Lord God! have mercy upon me! have mercy upon me!" And a little afterwards, "Thou knoweſt how I have loved thy truth." The wind parting the flames, his body, full of large bliſters, exhibited a dreadful ſpectacle to the beholders; his lips continued ſtill moving, as if actuated by intenſe devotion. During a full quarter of an hour, he diſcovered the ſigns not only of life, but of intellect.—Even his enemies thought the rage of his judges purſued him too far, when they ſaw his wretched coverlet, and the other miſerable garniture of his priſon, by their order, conſumed in the fire after him; and his

his aſhes, as thoſe of Huſs had been, thrown into the Rhine.

From this account of the trial, and death of Jerome, it ſeems as if the leading members of the council were determined, at any rate, to put him to death. We cannot otherwiſe ſee the reaſon of their bringing him to a ſecond hearing. They had already obtained a triumph over him. A ſecond trial made that again doubtful, which his recantation had decided in their favour. But it hath been the notorious practice of the church of Rome, in her dealings with capital offenders, to put them firſt to ſhame, and afterwards to death.

Among thoſe, who have treated of the death of Jerome, none hath done him more honour than Poggè the Florentine. The anecdotes of him preſerved by this writer have not yet been laid before the reader. As Poggè was not only a man of ſome eminence, but an adverſary likewiſe to the cauſe of Jerome, his teſtimony is of too much conſequence to be kneaded with the maſs of other authorities;

authorities; and will appear to moſt advantage by itſelf.

This eminent perſon had been bred in the court of Rome; and having been ſecretary under two popes, was well inſtructed in its deſigns. Here too he had every opportunity of gratifying his inclination for ſtudy; and was verſed alike in buſineſs, and in letters. He had a taſte for poetry alſo; and gained great credit by ſome ſatyrical compoſitions, which he publiſhed in the early part of his life. To his other praiſes he added that of an hiſtorian. His hiſtory of Florence is eſteemed an elegant at leaſt, though a partial compoſition. But the world is moſt indebted to him as an antiquarian. To his induſtry we owe many noble remains of antiquity, which he redeemed from that obſcurity, in which barbariſm had involved them; particularly the works of Quinctilian; which he had the happineſs to find compleat in a ruined monaſtery.

In what capacity he attended the council we have no account. As he relates matter of fact only, it is of little conſequence. The examination, and death of Jerome, of which he was an eye-witneſs, affected him in ſo ſtrong

ſtrong a manner, that he gave a full account of both to his friend Aretin at Rome, as the moſt extraordinary events he had met with, during his reſidence at Conſtance. The reader will conſider his letter on this occaſion, as a portrait warm from the life; and, if not a finiſhed picture, at leaſt a very ſpirited ſketch. It was written originally in Latin. The following is not meant as a literal tranſlation. Thoſe circumſtances, with which the reader hath been already made acquainted, in the courſe of the narrative, are omitted.

A letter from Poggè of Florence to Leonard Aretin.

"In the midſt of a ſhort excurſion into the country, I wrote to our common friend; from whom, I doubt not, you have had an account of me.

Since my return to Conſtance, my attention hath been wholly engaged by Jerome, the Bohemian heretic, as he is called. The eloquence, and learning, which this perſon hath employed in his own de-

fence are ſo extraordinary, that I cannot forbear giving you a ſhort account of him.

To confeſs the truth, I never knew the art of ſpeaking carried ſo near the model of ancient eloquence. It was indeed amazing to hear with what force of expreſſion, with what fluency of language, and with what excellent reaſoning he anſwered his adverſaries; nor was I leſs ſtruck with the gracefulneſs of his manner; the dignity of his action; and the firmneſs and conſtancy of his whole behaviour. It grieved me to think ſo great a man was labouring under ſo attrocious an accuſation. Whether this accuſation be a juſt one, God knows: for myſelf, I enquire not into the merits of it; reſting ſatisfied with the deciſion of my ſuperiors.—But I will juſt give you a ſummary of his trial.

After many articles had been proved againſt him, leave was at length given him to anſwer each in its order. But Jerome long refuſed, ſtrenuouſly contending, that he had many things to ſay previouſly in his defence; and that he ought firſt to be heard in general, before he deſcended to particulars.

culars. When this was over-ruled, "Here, ſaid he, ſtanding in the midſt of the aſſembly, here is juſtice; here is equity. Beſet by my enemies, I am already pronounced a heretic: I am condemned, before I am examined.—Were you Gods omniſcient, inſtead of an aſſembly of fallible men, you could not act with more ſufficiency.—Error is the lot of mortals; and you, exalted as you are, are ſubject to it. But conſider, that the higher you are exalted, of the more dangerous conſequence are your errors. —As for me, I know I am a wretch below your notice: but at leaſt conſider, that an unjuſt action, in ſuch an aſſembly, will be of dangerous example."

This, and much more, he ſpoke with great elegance of language, in the midſt of a very unruly and indecent aſſembly: and thus far at leaſt he prevailed; the council ordered, that he ſhould firſt anſwer objections; and promiſed that he ſhould then have liberty to ſpeak. Accordingly, all the articles alledged againſt him were publicly read; and then proved; after which he was aſked, whether he had ought to object? It is incredible with what acuteneſs

he anſwered; and with what amazing dexterity he warded off every ſtroke of his adverſaries. Nothing eſcaped him: his whole behaviour was truly great and pious. If he were indeed the man his defence ſpoke him, he was ſo far from meriting death, that in my judgment, he was not in any degree culpable.—In a word, he endeavoured to prove, that the greater part of the charge was purely the invention of his adverſaries.—Among other things, being accuſed of hating and defaming the holy ſee, the pope, the cardinals, the prelates, and the whole eſtate of the clergy, he ſtretched out his hands, and ſaid, in a moſt moving accent, "On which ſide, reverend fathers ſhall I turn me for redreſs? whom ſhall I implore? whoſe aſſiſtance can I expect? which of you hath not this malicious charge entirely alienated from me? which of you hath it not changed from a judge into an inveterate enemy?—It was artfully alledged indeed! Though other parts of their charge were of leſs moment, my accuſers might well imagine, that if this were faſtened on me, it could not fail

of

of drawing upon me the united indignation of my judges."

On the third day of this memorable trial, what had paſt was recapitulated: when Jerome, having obtained leave, tho' with ſome difficulty to ſpeak, began his oration with a prayer to God; whoſe divine aſſiſtance he pathetically implored. He then obſerved, that many excellent men, in the annals of hiſtory, had been oppreſſed by falſe witneſſes, and condemned by unjuſt judges. Beginning with profane hiſtory, he inſtanced the death of Socrates, the captivity of Plato, the baniſhment of Anaxagoras, and the unjuſt ſufferings of many others. He then inſtanced the many worthies, of the old Teſtament, in the ſame circumſtances, Moſes, Joſhua, Daniel, and almoſt all the prophets; and laſtly thoſe of the new, John the baptiſt, St. Stephen and others, who were condemned as ſeditious, prophane or immoral men. An unjuſt judgment, he ſaid, proceeding from a layic was bad; from a prieſt, worſe; ſtill worſe from a college of prieſts; and from a general council, ſuperlatively bad.—Theſe things

he ſpoke with ſuch force and emphaſis, as kept every one's attention awake.

On one point he dwelt largely. As the merits of the cauſe reſted entirely upon the credit of witneſſes, he took great pains to ſhew that very little was due to thoſe produced againſt him. He had many objections to them, particularly their avowed hatred to him; the ſources of which he ſo palpably laid open, that he made a ſtrong impreſſion upon the minds of his hearers; and not a little ſhook the credit of the witneſſes. The whole council was moved; and greatly inclined to pity, if not to favour him. He added, that he came uncompelled to the council; and that neither his life nor doctrine had been ſuch, as gave him the leaſt reaſon to dread an appearance before them. Difference of opinion, he ſaid, in matters of faith had ever ariſen among learned men; and was always eſteemed productive of truth, rather than of error, where bigotry was laid aſide. Such he ſaid was the difference between Auſtine and Jerome: and though their opinions were not only different, but contradictory, yet the imputation of hereſy was never fixed on either.

Every

Every one expected, that he would now either retract his errors, or at leaſt apologize for them: but nothing of the kind was heard from him: he declared plainly, that he had nothing to retract. He launched out into an high encomium of Huſs; calling him a holy man; and lamenting his cruel, and unjuſt death. He had armed himſelf, he ſaid, with a full reſolution to follow the ſteps of that bleſſed martyr; and to ſuffer with conſtancy whatever the malice of his enemies could inflict. "The perjured witneſſes, (ſaid he) who have appeared againſt me, have won their cauſe: but let them remember they have their evidence once more to give before a tribunal, where falſhood can be no diſguiſe."

It was impoſſible to hear this pathetic ſpeaker without emotion. Every ear was captivated; and every heart touched.—But wiſhes in his favour were vain: he threw himſelf beyond a poſſibility of mercy. Braving death, he even provoked the vengeance which was hanging over him. "If that holy martyr, (ſaid he, ſpeaking of Huſs,) uſed the clergy with diſreſpect, his cenſures were not levelled at them as prieſts, but as

wicked men. He ſaw with indignation thoſe revenues, which had been deſigned for charitable ends, expended upon pageantry and riot."

Through this whole oration he ſhewed a moſt amazing ſtrength of memory. He had been confined almoſt a year in a dungeon: the ſeverity of which uſage he complained of, but in the language of a great and good man. In this horrid place he was deprived of books and paper. Yet notwithſtanding this, and the conſtant anxiety, which muſt have hung over him, he was at no more loſs for proper authorities, and quotations, than if he had ſpent the intermediate time at leiſure in his ſtudy.

His voice was ſweet, diſtinct, and full: his action every way the moſt proper either to expreſs indignation, or to raiſe pity; though he made no affected application to the paſſions of his audience. Firm, and intrepid he ſtood before the council; collected in himſelf; and not only contemning, but ſeeming even deſirous of death. The greateſt character in ancient ſtory could not poſſibly go beyond him. If there is any juſtice in hiſtory this man will be admired by

by all poſterity.—I ſpeak not of his errors: let theſe reſt with him. What I admired was his learning, his eloquence, and amazing acuteneſs. God knows whether theſe things were not the ground-work of his ruin.

Two days were allowed him for reflection; during which time many perſons of conſequence, and particularly my lord cardinal of Florence, endeavoured to bring him to a better mind. But perſiſting obſtinately in his errors, he was condemned as an heretic.

With a chearful countenance, and more than Stoical conſtancy, he met his fate; fearing neither death itſelf, nor the horrible form, in which it appeared. When he came to the place, he pulled off his upper garment, and made a ſhort prayer * at the ſtake; to which he was ſoon after bound with wet cords, and an iron chain; and incloſed as high as his breaſt with faggots.

Obſerving

* *Flexis genibus veneratus eſt palum* (ſaith the original.) This certainly muſt have been a falſe interpretation of his praying *with his face turned towards the ſtake.* But other hiſtorians, on Poggè's authority, have taken up the notion, that he *prayed to the ſtake.*

Obſerving the executioner about to ſet fire to the wood behind his back, he cried out, "Bring thy torch hither. Perform thy office before my face. Had I feared death, I might have avoided it."

As the wood began to blaze he ſang an hymn, which the violence of the flame ſcarce interrupted.

Thus died this prodigious man. The epithet is not extravagant. I was myſelf an eye-witneſs of his whole behaviour. Whatever his life may have been, his death, without doubt, is a noble leſſon of philoſophy.

But it is time to finiſh this long epiſtle. You will ſay I have had ſome leiſure upon my hands: and to ſay the truth, I have not much to do here. This will, I hope, convince you, that greatneſs is not wholly confined to antiquity. You will think me perhaps tedious; but I could have been more prolix on a ſubject ſo copious.—Farewell, my dear Leonard."

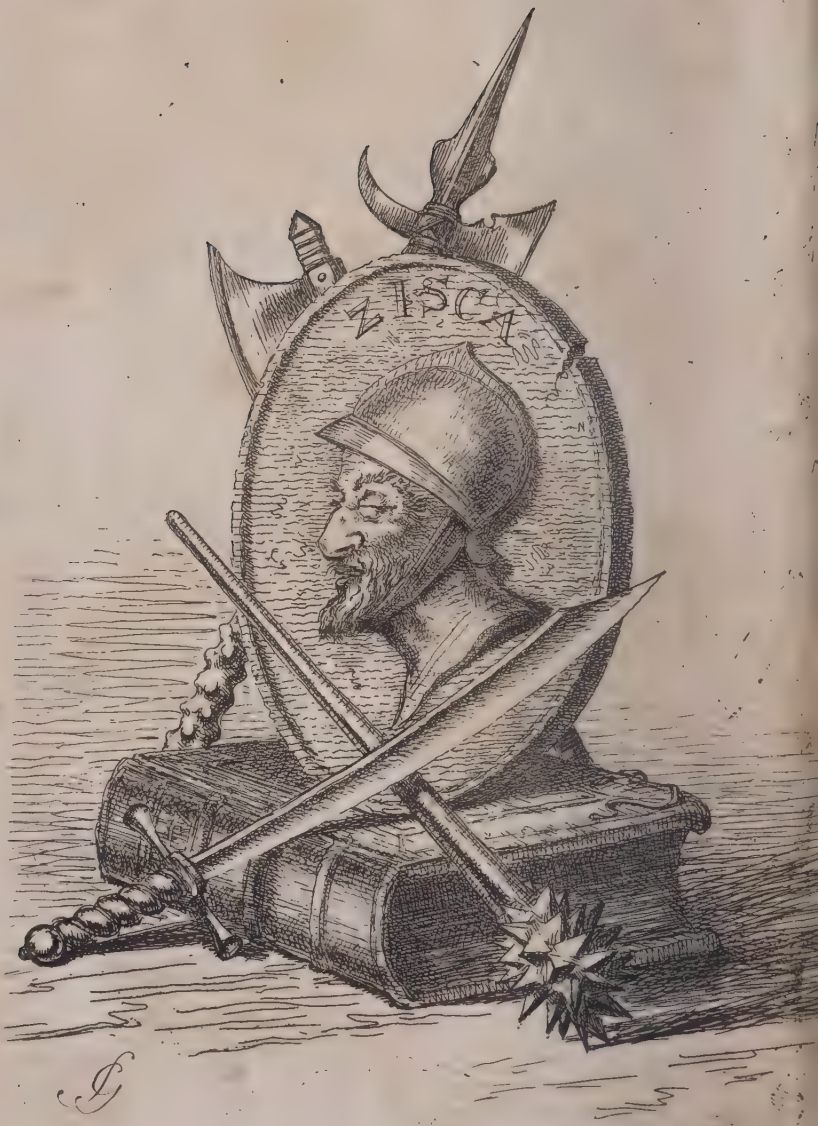
Conſtance, May 20.

Such was the teſtimony born to an adverſary by this ingenuous papiſt. His friend Aretin

Aretin was leſs candid. "You attribute more, ſays he, to this man, than I could wiſh. You ought at leaſt to *write* more cautiouſly of theſe things." And indeed, it is probable, Poggè would have written more cautiouſly, had he written a few days afterwards. But his letter is dated on the very day on which Jerome ſuffered, and came warm from the writer's heart. It is ſufficiently plain, what Poggè himſelf thought of the council, and its proceedings. His encomium on Jerome, is certainly a tacit cenſure of them.

The END.

THE



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THE

LIFE

OF

ZISCA.

IN the lives of John Huſs, and Jerome of Prague, we have ſeen great inſtances of the violence and injuſtice of the council of Conſtance. That bigotted aſſembly appeared ready to embrace any meaſures, and to run any lengths, to eſtabliſh the tyranny of the church of Rome. The life of Ziſca exhibits thoſe ſcenes of diſorder and ruin, which might be expected as the natural conſequences of ſuch furious zeal.

The real name of this eminent perſon was John de Trocznow. The epithet Ziſca was given

given him from his having loſt an eye; that word, in the Bohemian language, ſignifying one-eyed. He was a native of Bohemia; born of a good family, remarkable rather for its credit, than its wealth.

In the early part of his life Ziſca was introduced to Winceſlaus, whom he ſerved in the capacity of a page: but being tired of a ſubjection to the capricious and trifling humours of that prince, he gave up all expectations from royal favour, and left his country, with a reſolution to ſeek his fortune abroad. His intention was to enter into ſome military ſervice; having from his earlieſt youth diſcovered a ſtrong inclination to the profeſſion of arms.

He lived ſome time in Denmark, and afterwards in lower Saxony; but we find him not in any employment, till the breaking out of the wars with Poland, againſt the knights of the Teutonic order.

The Poles embracing Chriſtianity earlier than their neighbours, ſuffered from ſome of them a ſort of national perſecution. The irruptions of the Pruſſians were particularly formidable; with which hardy people they waged a long and unſucceſsful war. At length

length finding themſelves reduced, they called to their aſſiſtance the knights of the Teutonic order; by whoſe alliance being ſtrengthened, they ſoon brought their enemies to terms.

To recompenſe theſe foreigners, or more probably to fulfil a previous engagement, they allowed them to ſettle in Poland, and diſtributed lands among them. But the Poles had ſoon reaſon to repent of their civility. Theſe inſolent inmates made early encroachments upon their benefactors; and matters proceeding to extremity, a bloody war broke out. Neither ſide had much reaſon to boaſt, till the year 1410; when the knights ſuffered a total defeat: their grand-maſter was killed, and their whole army very ſeverely handled.

Ziſca, who had entered, at the beginning of the war into the ſervice of the king of Poland, diſtinguiſhed himſelf greatly in this battle. He led a battalion in that wing, which firſt turned the fortune of the day. The king preſented him with a purſe of ducats for his ſervices; and accompanied his liberality with a badge of honour.

The

The Poliſh generals however not purſuing their victory as they ought, the knights ſo far collected themſelves, as to enter with a good face into negotiation. A treaty was ſoon afterwards concluded; and Ziſca finding his ſword of no farther uſe in Poland, returned into Bohemia; where we meet him again, notwithſtanding his former prejudices, in the court of Winceſlaus; and in office about his perſon.

Upon the tragical fate of Huſs, which threw all Bohemia into confuſion, no one felt more acutely than Ziſca. He did not however vent his indignation, like others, in a clamour and threatening language; it ſat in a melancholy gloom upon his brows, and ſunk into his heart. The king, we are told, ſeeing him, from a window of the palace, walking in a thoughtful poſture, aſked him, upon what ſerious ſubject he was meditating? "Upon the bloody affront, anſwered Ziſca, which your majeſty's ſubjects have ſuffered at Conſtance." "It is true, replied Winceſlaus; but, I fear, it is neither in your power, nor in mine, to revenge it." This circumſtance, we are told, firſt inſpired Ziſca with

with a reſolution to aſſert the religious liberties of his country.

Beſides the affair of Conſtance, he wanted not other motives to incite him to this enterprize. Though a man of no great knowledge in matters of divinity, he had ſagacity enough to ſee the neceſſity of a thorough reformation in the diſcipline of the church. He had conceived likewiſe a ſteady diſlike to the clergy; founded more upon the corruption of their lives, than of their doctrine. We are told too, he had perſonal cauſe of reſentment; a favourite ſiſter having been debauched by a monk.

But with whatever zeal Ziſca and his friends were animated in private, in public they obſerved a commendable temper. While the council ſtill ſat, they had hope that ſome healing expedient might be found. Were the fathers there aſſembled in earneſt, it was impoſſible, they imagined, but ſomething would be done to remove abuſes, and allay diſtempers, become now ſo flagrant and alarming. They reſolved however to wait the event.

With theſe vain hopes they were deluded, till the diſſolution of the council, in the

beginning of the year 1418. Their eyes were now fully opened. That great aſſembly of Chriſtian biſhops, from the reſult of whoſe counſels, a full reformation of all abuſes was expected, were ſo far from anſwering thoſe ſanguine hopes, that they left things very little better than they found them; many things worſe, as ſanctified by a new authority. "Thus ended, (ſays the impartial Lenfant, in the concluſion of his hiſtory,) the famous council of Conſtance; in which it cannot be denyed, but that ſome things were done truly commendable, though that aſſembly by no means anſwered the general expectation of the world. It condemned men, who at worſt were only ſomewhat too forward in their zeal againſt abuſes, which all ſerious men acknowledged, and which even the council itſelf diſapproved. It ſpared errors likewiſe, which certainly tended to the deſtruction of all true religion. But what placed it in the worſt light, were the feeble efforts it made towards a reformation of the clergy; though it is evident, from the teſtimony of all writers, that the reformation

mation of the clergy was the avowed, and principal end it had in view."

The council being diſſolved, the heads of the reforming party in Bohemia knew what they had now to expect. They knew they had nothing to depend upon for the preſervation of their religious liberties, but their own ſtrength, and ſpirit.

If any hope of favour from the court of Rome ſtill remained, it was wholly diſſipated by a letter, which the new pope, Martin V. ſent into Bohemia, ſoon after his election. This letter was directed to the Huſſites, whom he charges with many and great hereſies. In particular, he tells them, they had trampled upon the ſtatues of the ſaints, and the ceremonies of the church; — that they had celebrated the feaſts of John Huſs, and Jerome of Prague; — that the ſacrament under both ſpecies had been adminiſtered among them; —and, in one word, that the church was never worſe treated under Nero, than it had been by them. He ſtill however gives them hopes of favour, if they would return again within their ancient pale; but threatens, if they continued obſtinate, to cut

them off entirely from the church, and give them as a prey to their enemies.

Martin not reſting his cauſe entirely upon this letter, ſent the cardinal Dominichi, as his Legate, into Bohemia. This miniſter ſoon informed himſelf of the temper of the country; and, after a ſhort and fruitleſs negotiation, wrote letters to the pope, and to the emperor Sigiſmond, (who claimed the crown after Winceſlaus, and was of courſe greatly intereſted in the affair,) acquainting them, it was in vain to expect any ſubmiſſion from that country, through means leſs effectual than open force.

During this negotiation, the heads of the reforming party, foreſeeing the evil at a diſtance, concerted meaſures for their ſafety. In the ſummer of the year 1418 they had a general meeting at the caſtle of Wiſgrade; the deſign of which was, to deliberate on the beſt means of preſerving the liberties of the church of Bohemia. They had no reverence for the pope; and very little for the emperor: with their own ſovereign they were deſirous of keeping terms. Their firſt reſolution therefore was to ſound the inclinations of Winceſlaus; that capricious prince having

having yet given them no certain evidence either of his favour or averſion. With this view, they ſent deputies to the king; who in the name of the aſſembly, acquainting him with the increaſing numbers of their ſect, requeſted the uſe of more churches.

Winceſlaus was ſurprized rather at the ſpirit in which the requeſt was made, than at the requeſt itſelf. He was diſſatisfied, as much as they were, with the affair of Conſtance; but he choſe to have the reſentment due upon that occaſion to appear as coming from himſelf; and he had no inclination, at this time, to ſhew it. On the other hand, here was a violent party, which would take no denial; whoſe ſtrength he knew as well as his own comparative weakneſs; and tho' it was hard for a monarch to receive law from his ſubjects, (for he could not but conſider their requeſt as a demand,) yet the remembrance of paſt misfortunes had taught him to put many reſtraints upon himſelf.

Agreeable to this perplexity, and to the darkneſs of his own character, he anſwered the deputies evaſively. He was greatly inclined, he ſaid, to favour them; but diſapproved paſſion and tumult. He required

them therefore to rely upon his honour; and as a pledge of their good intentions, to depoſit their arms with him.

With this anſwer the deputies returned. It was by no means ſatisfactory; and the more violent were for breaking all meaſures forthwith. The debates of theſe fierce ſpirits becoming tumultuous, Ziſca ſuddenly ſtarting up, cried out, Gentlemen, "I have long known the king, and am thoroughly acquainted with his temper: arm yourſelves and follow me." Thus attended he ſtood before Winceſlaus: "Behold, (ſaid he,) a body of your majeſty's faithful ſubjects; we have brought our arms, as you commanded: ſhew us your enemies; and you ſhall have reaſon to acknowledge, that our weapons can be in no hands more faithful to you, than in thoſe, which hold them." In a capricious, unprincipled mind, a ſudden evaſion hath often the weight of argument. It had on this occaſion. Struck with the heroic language, and appearance of theſe brave men, the king cried out, "Take your arms, gentlemen, and uſe them properly."—This action firſt recommended Ziſca to the confidence of his party; and gave an earneſt

earneſt of thoſe ſtrokes of policy, which his mind, fruitful of expedients, was afterwards found ſo capable of diſplaying.

The reſtraint however, which Winceſlaus put upon the reformers was ſoon removed. Tired with the paſt, and dreading the future, which he ſaw approaching in a ſtorm, that unhappy prince at length gave way to the anguiſh of his ſpirit, and ſunk under a weight of grief. His death was accelerated by a violent fit of paſſion, in the agony of which he expired; leaving it a conteſt among hiſtorians, whether the man or the prince was more contemptible in his character.

Upon the death of Winceſlaus, the crown of Bohemia was claimed, as hath been ſaid, by his brother the emperor Sigiſmond. This claim made an entire change in the ſyſtem of the reformers. They now ſaw their civil, as well as religious liberties in danger; and came to an unanimous reſolution to oppoſe the emperor at the hazard of their lives. They were perſuaded they had a conſtitutional right to elect their own prince; and againſt Sigiſmond they had many objections. The ſhare he had in the buſineſs of Conſtance had rendered him odious to

the whole reforming party. But his avowed principles in favour of the court of Rome, were the grand obſtacle.

On the other hand, the friends of the emperor, at the head of whom was the queen dowager, who had been appointed regent, took meaſures to ſupport his title. They proclaimed him at Prague; adminiſtred oaths to thoſe in office about the court; and removed ſuch as were thought ill-affected to his government.

The reformers, unwilling to give the queen any advantage by their delay, took arms without farther heſitation; and chuſing Ziſca their general, declared war againſt all the adherents of the emperor, and upholders of the tyranny of the church of Rome.

The regular clergy felt the firſt effects of this commotion. Theſe, wherever found, Ziſca treated with ſufficient ſeverity. "Let us, ſaid he, encouraging his men, drive theſe fatted hogs from their ſties."

The queen-regent alarmed at theſe proceedings, wrote an account of them to the emperor; intreating ſpeedy aid, and aſſuring him, the inſurrection was by no means trivial.

Sigiſmond

Sigiſmond was, at that time, engaged in an expedition againſt the Turks; and could not immediately, without ſome diſcredit, turn his arms towards Bohemia. The queen, thus left to herſelf, exerted a ſpirit proportioned to the emergence; and drawing together what troops ſhe was able, ſtrengthened the works of Prague, and ſhut herſelf up in it with a good garriſon. She was well aſſured, however, the city was not wholly hers, the new town being chiefly inhabited by reformers. With great ſkill therefore ſhe fortified all the avenues, which led from one town to the other; and in particular the bridge over the Muldaw.

The ſtandard of the reformers having been erected only a few weeks, Ziſca found himſelf at the head of 40,000 men; a body of troops leſs formidable for their numbers, than for their martial ardour. Well knowing that action is the life of a tumultuary army, he took the field without delay; and finding himſelf in want of garriſons, for almoſt every fortreſs in the kingdom was in the hands of the imperialiſts, he reſolved to open the campaign by the ſiege of Pilſen. This town lay conveniently for him, as it

was

was in the midſt of a country greatly devoted to his intereſt. Here his troops firſt ſignalized their courage. Though few of them had ſeen action before, they mounted the wall like veterans; and after a ſhort diſpute became maſters of the fortreſs. Ziſca having added to its works, put a garriſon into it, and made it a place of arms.

From hence he ſent out parties, and took in the caſtles, and ſtrong holds in the neighbourhood: ſo that in a little time he found all the ſouth-weſt part of Bohemia in his hands; and his army greatly increaſed by theſe conqueſts.

While Ziſca was thus employed, his friends in Prague were endeavouring their utmoſt to make themſelves maſters of that city. Notwithſtanding the watchful eye, which was continually upon them, they had their private meetings; and having formed a ſcheme, they made a deſperate attempt to paſs the Muldaw, where that river divides, at the iſle of St. Benedict. The encounter was ſharp and bloody: the imperialiſts however maintained their poſt.

The reformers, not diſcouraged, made their next attempt upon the bridge. Here they

they fought with incredible firmneſs, and with more ſucceſs. Five days, and five nights, with little intermiſſion, the diſpute laſted: during which time, both parties, as may be imagined, ſuffered greatly; and ſome of the faireſt buildings of the town, particularly the great council-chamber, were deſtroyed. The reformers at length carried their point; and the imperialiſts took ſhelter in the caſtle.

The emperor was now alarmed in earneſt. He withdrew his troops ſuddenly from the confines of Turkey, and making haſty marches towards Bohemia with part of his cavalry, appointed his army to follow his rout.

At Brin in Moravia he halted; and being greatly deſirous of bringing matters to a fair accommodation, ſent deputies to Prague to treat of peace.

At the head of theſe deputies was Gaſpar Selic, one of the moſt accompliſhed ſtateſmen of his time. His father was a German, and his mother an Italian. From theſe he inherited the good qualities of each people; the ſolidity of the one; the inſinuating manners

ners of the other; and the characteriſtic foibles of neither.

This artful miniſter put the emperor's affairs into a hopeful train. He managed all parties with ſuch dexterity, convincing them how much it was their intereſt to coaleſce; that he ſoon brought on a treaty. As a preliminary, Ziſca gave up Pilſen, and all the other fortreſſes he had taken. He ſeems indeed to have been influenced by the citizens of Prague; who, having ſeen their town miſerably harraſſed in the late commotions, were already weary of the diſpute.

In this hopeful way were the affairs of the emperor, when an unhappy letter, which he wrote to the magiſtrates of Prague, ruined all. In this letter, after congratulating them on the proſpect of a ſpeedy peace, which he mentions as an event equally advantageous to all parties, he tells them, he hopes, they ſhall never have occaſion to repent the confidence they had placed in him; and promiſes to govern, after the model of his father, the emperor Charles. Whether by governing after the model of his father, Sigiſmond meant only in civil matters, which is moſt probable; or whether he inſinuated his

his intention with regard to religion, it is certain he expreſſed himſelf either negligently or imprudently. It was preſently caught up and propagated among the reformers, whoſe watchful ears were alarmed by the leaſt ſound of danger, and that the emperor had at laſt dealt honeſtly with them;—that he had now ſhewn his full intention;—that he could not even keep on the diſguiſe, till he had them fairly in his power; but, they thanked God, they had yet time to take other meaſures.

If any thing was wanting, after this imprudent letter, to ruin the intereſts of Sigiſmond in Bohemia, his impolitic behaviour afterwards compleated the work. Having put the treaty of Prague, as he hoped, on a good footing he went to Breſlaw; where, it ſeems, the ſpirit of Ziſca had diffuſed itſelf; and the citizens had ſhewn ſome zeal in his cauſe. They opened their gates however to the emperor; and received him with great appearance of devotion. Sigiſmond, inſtead of taking theſe half-formed ſubjects under his protection, and careſſing them with tenderneſs, was improperly adviſed to make a ſtrict enquiry after the authors of the

the late diſturbances, many of whom he treated with ſeverity enough. The impolitic monarch was unacquainted with the ſpirit of theſe men: he had not yet learned, that perſecution in no ſhape could ſubdue them; and that nothing could work upon them, but gentle treatment, and great toleration.

The conduct of Sigiſmond at Breſlaw was an alarm-bell from one end of Bohemia to the other. Not a man but was ready to take arms. "What! ſhall we ſee ourſelves tamely ſlaughtered like ſheep? Let us ſhew this haughty tyrant, that we are not yet victims deſtined to his knife."

The high ſpirit, which was thus raiſed among the reformers, ſoon ſhewed itſelf in action. Their firſt attempt was on the caſtle of Prague; of the town they were already in poſſeſſion. This ſtrong fortreſs was maintained for the emperor by Zincho, a German officer, in whom the queen had great confidence. But he deceived her expectation. Ziſca, who knew the governor's foible, bad ſo high for his virtue, that he became maſter of the caſtle without ſtriking a blow.

Sigiſmond

Sigiſmond by this time ſaw his errors; and had only left, if poſſible, to retrieve them. The hopes of peace, he obſerved, had greatly diſſipated the tumultuary army of the reformers. He reſolved therefore to attack them with what troops he had about him, which conſiſted only of a few regiments of horſe, the groſs of his army not being yet arrived; and, if poſſible, to cruſh them, before they could well aſſociate.

But Ziſca, ſufficiently upon his guard, retreated before his unſkilful enemies into a mountainous and rocky country, where he knew their horſe would only be an incumbrance to them. Having thus choſen his ground, he drew up his ſmall army, which was compoſed entirely of infantry, in a very advantageous manner; and on the nineteenth of Auguſt, 1420, preſented himſelf to the enemy.

The imperialiſts ſaw their danger, but knew not how to avoid it. To fight on horſeback was impracticable: to retreat, barely poſſible. Diſmounting they formed on foot. But Ziſca ſeconding his conduct with his bravery, fell on them with ſuch irreſiſtible fury, that they were immediately thrown

thrown into confuſion; and were all either cut in pieces on the ſpot, or ſlaughtered in the defiles.

The fabulous writers of thoſe times attribute this victory to a very improbable device of Ziſca. He ordered the women, we are informed, who attended his camp, to ſtrew their handkerchiefs and aprons in the front of the army, in which the ſpurs of the imperialiſts being intangled, the reformers had an eaſy victory.

Ziſca, whoſe army daily increaſed, purſuing his conqueſt, appeared ſuddenly before Auſca. This town had little favour to expect, having always treated the reformers with more than uſual ſeverity; at the inſtigation chiefly of Ulric, the governor, a man of a ſavage diſpoſition. The formality of a ſiege not ſuiting the circumſtances of Ziſca, he made a general aſſault; and after a ſharp diſpute carried the town. He gave orders, the ſame day to ſet it on fire, and level it with the ground; leaving behind him a monument of his vengeance, ill-becoming the cauſe in which he fought. The unhappy Ulric, falling into his hands, was put to an ignominious death.

Ziſca

Ziſca employed the ſhort reſpite, which his enemies, at this time allowed him, in fortifying a camp. Though the ſummer was wearing apace, yet he had reaſon to expect the emperor would lie quiet only till he had collected his troops. The puſh, he doubted not, would be vigorous; and if any ſiniſter event ſhould await him, he foreſaw, that all would be ruined, if he had no retreat. Pilſen he had given up: Prague indeed was in his hands; but Prague was a divided town; too extenſive for a garriſon, and too populous.

Near Bechin, the provincial town of its circle, about 40 miles ſouth of Prague, an arm of the Muldaw, winding round a craggy hill, forms a peninſula, the neck of which is ſcarce thirty feet broad. The hill itſelf is acceſſible on one ſide only. This was the place which Ziſca choſe for his camp; a place, which nature had nobly fortified to his hand. The declivity he aſſigned to his companions, on which they pitched their tents; at the ſummit he erected his own; incloſing the whole with a good rampart; and fortifying the neck of the peninſula with a broad ditch, and two ſtrong towers. In

time theſe tents became houſes, his own pavilion a caſtle, and the ramparts and ditches, impregnable walls. To this fortreſs he gave the name of Tabor, alluding to the hill on which it ſtood. It makes, at this day, an appearance in the maps of Bohemia.

While Ziſca was employed in this buſineſs, he had intelligence, that a body of imperial horſe lay in the neighbourhood, obſerving his motions. He took his opportunity, and ſurpriſing them at midnight, ſurrounded the village in which they were quartered; and made the whole party, conſiſting of a thouſand men, priſoners of war.

The action was trifling, but had conſequences, which Ziſca did not foreſee. He had long wanted a body of horſe, which, in the neceſſity of his affairs, he had never been able to raiſe; and thought the ſuits of armour and horſes, which on this occaſion, fell into his hands, were a very valuable prize, as they might become a good foundation for a body of cavalry; without which he never afterwards took the field. He was himſelf an excellent horſeman, fond of horſes,

horſes, and of the management of them; and if in any one part of the general's duty he laid himſelf more particularly out, it ſeems to have been in that of forming his cavalry.

The attention of Ziſca, was, at this time, for a few days engaged in a very extraordinary manner. An enthuſiaſtic Picard; or, as others call him, a Fleming of the name of Picard, leaving his own country, and paſſing the Rhine, wandered into Bohemia. On his journey, he had drawn many followers of both ſexes after him; whom he deceived by a ſtrange volubility of rhapſody; and pretences to a power little leſs than almighty; of which he ſeemed to give many very ſurprizing inſtances. Whatever his impoſtures were, they were ſufficiently adapted to the credulity of his followers; with whom, and ſuch proſelytes as he gained in the country, he ſeized an iſland upon the Muldaw, not far from Tabor, where he ſettled in the form of a ſociety.

Here he began to unfold his doctrines; which differed little from thoſe of the old Adamites, and were in a high degree impious and deteſtable. He declared himſelf the

ſon of God, called himſelf Adam, and profeſſing he was ſent to revive the law of nature, made his religion to conſiſt chiefly in the entire diſuſe of cloaths, and in the free indulgence of promiſcuous luſt. The children thus born, were accounted free; all mankind beſides were conſidered as ſlaves.

Theſe vile ſectaries ſoon became a general peſt. Among their other horried extravagancies, they made an excurſion into the country, and put to the ſword not fewer than 200 of the peaſants: "They were ſlaves, and did not deſerve the breath of God."

Ziſca being now at leiſure, was eaſily wrought on by the deſires of the country, to extirpate theſe execrable wretches. The peaſants furniſhing boats, he invaded the iſland; and the Adamites, except a few, who died in arms, were all taken. They were equally involved in guilt, and, after a very ſummary form of juſtice, were all put to death.

While Ziſca was thus engaged, the emperor was making preparations for a more formidable attempt than he had yet made. Rouſed by the late ſucceſſes of his antagoniſt,

niſt, he began now to think the affair grew ſerious; and having drawn together his whole force, and preſſed into his ſervice a body of Sileſians, he entered Bohemia, on the ſide of Glatz; which town, with many other places, ſubmitted. In a few days, he arrived before Prague, and encamped within half a league of the city. As he had many friends in the place, he choſe to make his firſt effort in the way of negotiation.

Upon the earlieſt news of the emperors march, Ziſca, with an equal army, was in motion. He was ſecretly glad to hear, that Sigiſmond had made an attempt on Prague; not doubting but he would be obliged to waſte the remaining part of the ſummer in a fruitleſs ſiege. It was matter therefore of equal concern and aſtoniſhment to him, to ſee from the heights, as he approached the town, the emperor's ſtandard erected on the caſtle. He was ſoon informed, that Sigiſmond had followed the example, which himſelf had ſet; and upon a good underſtanding with the governor, had found the means of introducing 4000 men into that fortreſs, the evening before. He was informed too, that the Imperialiſts had made

an attempt upon the town that morning, and were in hopes of maſtering it, before relief ſhould arrive.

Ziſca had now an opportunity of diſplaying his great talents. Upon reflection he began to hope, that if the town only could hold out, he might yet, by an after-game, recover all. Being acquainted with every defile, and ſpot of ground in the neighbourhood, he harraſſed the Imperialiſts with continual alarms, beat them from their works, ſeized every poſt as they deſerted it, and allowing them only a very diſadvantageous field of battle, which it had been ruin to accept, obliged the whole body of them at length to retire into the caſtle. He had now compleated half his work: what remained was as expeditiouſly performed. With great art and induſtry he ſo entirely blockaded the place, that the emperor in the ſame inſtant ſaw the neceſſity, and the impracticability of a retreat.

Sigiſmond was now in great perplexity. Pent up in ſtraitened quarters, with a numerous garriſon, no magazines provided, and no proſpect of relief, he had nothing before him, but famine and peſtilence; or, what he

he dreaded as much as either, the vengeance of Ziſca, who would certainly make him pay the utmoſt price of the advantage he had gained. Full of theſe racking thoughts, he put on however an air of compoſed dignity, which no man could better aſſume: and to divert the melancholy of thoſe about him, and intoxicate the imaginations of the ſoldiery, he ordered himſelf to be crowned king of Bohemia. This vain piece of pageantry was performed by the archbiſhop of Prague, who had thrown himſelf under his protection. The marquiſs of Brandenburgh, the elector of Saxony, and the archduke of Auſtria, who ſerved under Sigiſmond, aſſiſted at the ceremony.

Ziſca's joy, upon this happy criſis of his affairs, paſſed the bounds of his uſual moderation. "Now, my friends, he would ſay to his officers, it is ours to give law. From this glorious day, let Bohemia boaſt the eſtabliſhment of her liberties." In the mean time he remitted nothing of his accuſtomed vigour. His works were carried on with unabated ardour; he viſited every poſt himſelf, and hourly expected, as the

reward of his labours, that his prey would fall into his hands.

But Ziſca's conduct, able as it was, was ineffectual. Sigiſmond ſummoned all his fortitude; and knowing he had nothing to depend on but the edge of his ſword, in circumſtances, which would have added ſtrength to the feeble, he determined to hazard all upon one deſperate puſh. He had the beſt intelligence, from his friends in the city, of all that paſſed in Ziſca's quarters; which he ſuddenly attacked at midnight, with all his forces, where he was well informed the poſt was weakeſt. The Taborites, by which name Ziſca's adherents began now to be diſtinguiſhed, were not ſurpriſed. Both ſides fought, like men, who had their religion, and liberty at ſtake. The imperialiſts in the end prevailed by mere ſuperiority of numbers; and opened the paſs, before any reinforcement could arrive.

The riſing ſun diſcovered the ſlaughter, and horrible confuſion of the night; and did full credit to the bravery of the Taborites, who with a handful of men had reſiſted an army: and Ziſca, though unfortunate, made ſuch an impreſſion upon his enemies,

mies, by the firmneſs of his troops, as was never afterwards forgotten.

Some authors relate, that Sigiſmond eſcaped by means of a very extraordinary ſtratagem. He got together a quantity of combuſtibles, in which he mixed a drug of ſuch a nature, that when fired, it emitted a moſt peſtilential ſtench. The ſmoke of this, ſay theſe writers, being driven in the faces of the enemy, occaſioned them immediately to abandon their poſt. This improbable tale ſeems to have ariſen, from the emperor's making his attack under the cover of ſmoke; or invented from a belief, that Ziſca could not be conquered by any ordinary means.

The poſt, which the imperialiſts had thus forced, was not far from the camp of the the Taborites, which was the head quarters of Ziſca. Prompted by his ſucceſs, the emperor came to a ſpeedy reſolution, at day-break, to endeavour to force this likewiſe. Not ſatisfied with an eſcape, he now ſtrove for maſtery; and encouraging his men ſtill covered with duſt, and blood, he led them to the aſcent, on which Ziſca lay encamped. "Yonder, cryed he, lye your proviſions."

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The Hungary veteran preſſed on; the camp, thinned by numerous outpoſts, was inſtantly entered; and the Taborites could only die in its defence. As we are not informed that Ziſca was in the action, it is probable he was in ſome other quarter at the time of the attack.

This was a cruel ſtroke upon him. His hopes were now entirely blaſted. A favourable opportunity had been wreſted from him; his camp had been deſtroyed, and his baggage plundered. But theſe were trivial loſſes. Another opportunity might offer; his tents and baggage might eaſily be replaced. But the loſs of his credit in arms he dreaded as an irreparable loſs. His being thought invincible, he well knew could only ſupport his cauſe; and he had ſufficient reaſon to fear, that if his troops eſteemed him leſs the favourite of heaven, than they had hitherto done, they would inſtantly deſert.—Theſe were the mortifying reflections, which accompanied his retreat.

In the mean time Sigiſmond made the utmoſt of his advantage. The principal of Ziſca's poſts he ſeized; and, returning to his old enterpriſe, blocked up the city.

Here

Here diviſion reigned. The emperor's party was ſtrong; but Ziſca's prevailed to keep the gates ſhut: and ſuch was the extreme diſorder of the place, and the rancour, which appeared on both ſides, that ſober men had juſt grounds to fear the worſt from the ſucceſs of either.

While Sigiſmond was thus engaged in the ſiege of Prague, Ziſca was employed in recruiting his army; in which he had better ſucceſs than he expected. The ſpirit of his adherents was of too high a temper to be cooled by one ſiniſter event. The quarrel was important. Their intereſts were deeply embarked; and there was no reaſon yet to give up all for loſt. They fully confided in their general; and ſeemed to make it a point to ſhew that confidence by their activity in raiſing troops. So that in fact before Ziſca could feel his loſs, it was repaired.

Sigiſmond had now lain ſix weeks before Prague, harraſſed daily by the army of Ziſca, which ſeemed to have recovered freſh ſpirits from its defeat. The poſts of the imperialiſts were attacked; their foraging ſtraitened; and their proviſions cut off. Once Sigiſmond had the mortification to ſee a conſiderable part

part of his troops defeated, and very roughly handled. His ſupplies too from Germany came in more leiſurely than he expected. Theſe things abated greatly that eagerneſs with which he began his deſign. But an event ſoon afterwards totally diſcouraged him.

Near Prague ſtood a craggy hill, which Ziſca, thinking it a poſt of advantage, had ſeized and fortified. From this eminence he greatly annoyed the emperor; ſo that Sigiſmond at length found, he muſt either give up all hopes of taking the city, or make himſelf maſter of this poſt. His efforts were ineffectual: the poſt was ſtronger than he ſuppoſed, when he attempted force; better guarded, when he attempted ſurprize. One effort more he was determined to make. With this view he ſent the marquiſs of Miſnia with a large body of men, ſufficient as he thought, to force it. The marquiſs met with little to oppoſe his march. The Taborites, except a few cautious ſkirmiſhers, lay cloſe in their trenches. The Imperialiſts, misjudging this the effect of fear, aſcended with the more preſumption. They now approached the craggy part of the top, overcome with toil; when on a ſudden the

the Taborites leaping out, with loud ſhouts, from every part of the intrenchments, fell on them with all the fury of impatient ardour. Amazement checked the Imperialiſts, and the firſt ſhock obliged them to give ground. They would have retreated, but their able adverſary had made ſure work,—their retreat was intercepted. They had only to chuſe the manner of their death. On one hand were the ſwords of an enraged foe; on the other a precipice. The whole affair was inſtantly decided; and before mercy could take place, ſcarce an object of mercy remained. The marquiſs himſelf, with a few of his followers, eſcaped.

This terrible diſaſter, by which the emperor loſt near one third of his army, reduced him to the neceſſity of raiſing the ſiege. He gave all neceſſary orders by ſunſet; and, at the cloſe of the evening, drew off his troops in ſilence, without drum or trumpet, accompanied with all thoſe ſigns of mute dejection, and terrors of alarm, which commonly attend diſgraced armies. Ziſca purſued his rear; but with little advantage, the emperor conducting his retreat in a very maſterly manner.

Thus

Thus ended this momentous affair; in which great military ſkill, and great courage had been ſhewn on both ſides. So equal indeed the contention had been, that it is hard to ſay, whether Sigiſmond deſerved more praiſe by obliging Ziſca to raiſe the ſiege of the caſtle; or Ziſca by obliging him to raiſe the ſiege of the town. Undiſtinguiſhing Fame however blew her trumpet over the banners of the ſucceſsful hero; and gave Ziſca that full glory, which his noble adverſary ſhould have divided with him.

Such was the firſt ſummer of the war; in which Ziſca ſufficiently tried his ſtrength, and found the courage of his men proportioned to any ſervice. He had the ſatisfaction likewiſe of finding himſelf, notwithſtanding his many loſſes, at the head of a greater army when he cloſed, than when he opened the campaign.

Early in the ſpring, of the next year, 1421, Ziſca took the field; and began this campaign, as he had begun the laſt, by deſtroying all the monaſteries, which he met with in his march. His deſign was upon the caſtle of Wiſgrade, a ſtrong fortreſs near Prague, where Sigiſmond had placed a numerous

merous garriſon. He endeavoured firſt to take it by ſtorm; but loſing many men in the attempt, and ſeeing little likelihood of ſucceeding in that way, he turned the ſiege into a blockade.

The magazines of the beſieged in a little time growing ſcanty, and their very horſes being now conſumed, they began to think of a capitulation; and propoſed to deliver up the caſtle within ſo many days, if the emperor did not relieve it. The condition was accepted, and the time being nearly elapſed, Ziſca had intelligence, that Sigiſmond was approaching with his army. He put himſelf immediately in a poſture to receive him; and ſent advice of his march to Prague. The Taborite party there inſtantly taking arms, poſted themſelves according to Ziſca's direction, in ſome defiles, through which the Imperialiſts were obliged to paſs. Sigiſmond, not expecting hoſtilities from that quarter, and having his eye fixed on Ziſca, fell into the ſnare. It was a maſſacre, rather than a battle; and the emperor eſcaped with a remainder of his army, only becauſe his enemies were too much fatigued to urge the ſlaughter farther,

the

the ſeverity of this action fell chiefly upon the Hungarian, and Moravian troops; whoſe officers, the prime nobility of their reſpective countries, diſtinguiſhing themſelves with great ſpirit, if any diſtinction could be made in ſuch confuſion, were almoſt entirely cut off. Some writers give the credit to this action to Ziſca in perſon. He retreated, we are told, at the emperor's approach; and in the ſecurity of the night returning, attacked his camp with ſuch fury, as ſoon ended the conteſt.

The emperor, thus maimed, was in no condition to keep his appointment with the caſtle of Wiſgrade; which immediately ſurrendered upon the news of his defeat. This was the moſt valuable acquiſition which Ziſca had made, no garriſon in thoſe parts holding a larger territory in devotion.

Ziſca was now at leiſure to attend a little to the work of Reformation; a work which he had exceedingly at heart. For himſelf, tho' he was more a ſoldier than a divine; yet he had in general an utter deteſtation of the ſupremacy of the court of Rome, and a high

a high eſteem for the memory of Huſs. What he aimed at therefore was to give a form, and ſettlement, to the opinions of that reformer. With this view he conſulted thoſe eſpecially, for whom he knew Huſs had ever had the higheſt regard; and ſhewed he could, on this occaſion, exert as much prudent caution, as on other occaſions he had exerted vigour and activity.

While Ziſca was thus employed in eſtabliſhing a church, like the Jews in Ezra's time, he kept his ſword continually drawn. Sigiſmond, tho' he durſt not fairly meet him, would harraſs him with conſtant alarms. Nor was Ziſca, in his heart, diſpleaſed at theſe frequent viſits. "It is friendly, ſaid he, in the emperor, to keep our ſwords from ruſting in their ſcabbards."

Indeed Ziſca had leſs to fear from the enemy than from inaction. Danger was the great central force, which drew men to him; and his authority roſe in proportion to the fears of the multitude. Of courſe, he dreaded no artifice like a falſe peace. He well knew how eaſily the minds of the people were deluded; and he wanted thoſe neceſſary means of keeping a body of men

together, which his adverſary poſſeſſed; a military law, and a military cheſt. Mere native authority ſtood in lieu of both.

He had an evil too of another kind to contend with. The Bohemian clergy were in general, beyond conception, ignorant: and too many of thoſe, who came over to the reformed opinions, brought nothing with them, in ſupport of the new cauſe they had adopted, but an inflamed zeal againſt the pope, and the emperor. Not a few of theſe bigots followed the camp of Ziſca; and having great influence upon the people, which they were forward, on all occaſions, to ſhew, they frequently interfered with his ſchemes, and oppoſed his meaſures. A feſtival, or a faſt-day, was improper for action; the eaſt-ſide of a town was never to be attacked; and encampment was to be formed, and an army drawn up, as nearly as could be in the form of a croſs. Theſe were in general, points not only of moment, but of indiſpenſible neceſſity.

Indeed Ziſca had never more occaſion for his addreſs, nor, upon any occaſion, more ſhewed it, than in the management of theſe miſguided zealots. In trifles he conformed, with

with great deference, to their humours, that he might with a better grace remonſtrate in matters of importance. The influence however which he had from the firſt over the ſoldiery, ſettled by degrees into a confirmed authority; and in proportion as more weight was thrown into his ſcale, the other aſcended. The clergy had beſides made themſelves ſo contemptible in many inſtances, that even the common ſoldiers began to detect their folly. Hiſtory takes notice of a ridiculous accident, which contributed not a little to deſtroy their credit. They had expreſſed their diſlike to a piece of ground, where Ziſca lay encamped; and with great haughtineſs had ordered the intrenchments to be razed. The chief, unwilling to relinquiſh a ſituation, which was very advantageous, with equal firmneſs perſevered. But he was given to underſtand, that all remonſtrance was to no purpoſe; — that fire would certainly the next day deſcend from heaven upon that accurſed ſpot; — and that he muſt inſtantly decamp, unleſs he choſe to ſee his men burnt alive before his face. This dreadful prediction of divine wrath ſpread an alarm through the camp, which Ziſca had not in-

fluence to withſtand: the ſoldiers ſcarce waited for orders: the tents were inſtantly torn up, and the ground entirely deſerted. In the morning, when every one expected to ſee the devoted ſpot overwhelmed with a tempeſt of fire, ſuch a deluge of rain fell, as if ſent on purpoſe to turn the prophecy into ridicule. The troops were aſhamed of their folly in liſtening to ſuch teachers; and it became a common jeſt in the army, that the prophecies of their clergy, and the completion, were as oppoſite to each other, as fire and water.—In the infancy however of his affairs, theſe people had given great diſturbances to Ziſca; whoſe uſual method was, when he obſerved any ſymptoms of uneaſineſs in his camp, to ſpread alarms, and draw his men into action. He thought it imprudent to ſuffer the quarrel to languiſh, till the full eſtabliſhment of peace; and when the enemy did not find him employment, he found it for himſelf; making expeditions into the country, and deſtroying the caſtles, and ſtrong holds, wherever he became maſter.

One of theſe expeditions almoſt proved fatal to him. He was incamped before the

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town of Rubi, which he had almoſt reduced to extremities. As he was viewing a part of the works, where he intended an aſſault, an arrow ſhot from the wall ſtruck him in the eye. The wound being thought dangerous, the ſurgeons of the army propoſed his being carried to Prague, where he might have the beſt advice. In reality they were afraid of being cut in pieces by the troops, if he ſhould die under their hands. When his removal to the capital was reſolved on, it was difficult to check the conteſt among the ſoldiers, who ſtrove for the honour of carrying their wounded general. At Prague the arrow was extracted; which being barbed, tore out the eye with it; and it was feared, the fever which ſucceeded might prove fatal to him. His life however, though with difficulty, was ſaved.

He was now totally blind: his friends therefore were ſurprized to hear him talk after his recovery, of ſetting out for the army; and did what was in their power to diſſuade him from it. But he continued reſolute: "I have yet, ſaid he, my blood to ſhed; let me be gone." He ſuffered himſelf however to undergo the affected formality of being in-

treated by a deputation from the army; and enjoyed the pleaſure of hearing the ſoldiers, in tumults around his quarters, cry aloud, "they would throw down their arms, unleſs their general were reſtored."

In the mean time Sigiſmond had lain quiet: at leaſt his army, ſince its defeat before Wiſgrade, had appeared in no ſhape in Bohemia, but in that of ſcouting parties. This calm in the emperor's quarters was only the lowring ſtillneſs of a riſing ſtorm. Sigiſmond had been making preparations during the ſummer. At Nuremburgh he convened the ſtates of the empire. Here, in full convention, (for, it ſeems, no prince except the elector of Treves was abſent,) he opened to them his embarraſſed circumſtances; and intreated them for the ſake of their ſovereign, for the honour of the empire, and in the cauſe of their religion, to put themſelves in arms. His harangue had its effect. Proper meaſures were concerted; and the aſſembly broke up, with an unanimous reſolution to make this audacious rebel feel the full weight of the empire: and that the blow might fall the more unexpected, it was reſolved to defer it till

till the end of the year; when it was hoped, that Ziſca might the more eaſily be ſurprized, as great part of his troops left him in the winter, and returned again in the ſpring.

The campaign, as that chief imagined, was now over, when he was ſuddenly alarmed with the report of theſe vaſt preparations; and ſoon after with the march of two powerful armies againſt him; one of which was compoſed of confederate Germans, under the marquiſs of Brandenburg, the archbiſhop of Mentz, the count-palatine of the Rhine, and other princes of the empire; the other of Hungarians and Sileſians, under the emperor himſelf. The former were to invade Bohemia on the weſt; the latter on the eaſt. They were to meet in the middle; and as they affected to give out, would cruſh this handful of vexatious ſectaries between them. At the head of ſuch a force, the emperor could not avoid being ſanguine.

They who are acquainted with the nature of armies intended to march in concert, know the difficulty of making ſuch unweildy bodies obſerve thoſe exact laws of motion, which prudent generals trace out in councils of

war. Some unforeſeen event generally creates ſome unavoidable difficulty.

It happened thus on the preſent occaſion, Sigiſmond, diſappointed in a contract for forage, was obliged to defer his march. He was retarded too by the Auſtrian and Hungarian nobility, who entring as volunteers into his ſervice, and being ſuddenly called upon, had not gotten their equipages and dependants, without which their dignity could not take the field, in ſuch readineſs as it was thought they might have had them.

The confederate princes, in the mean time, began their march; and were already advanced a conſiderable way in Bohemia, before they heard of the emperor's diſappointment. Sigiſmond gave them hopes, that he would preſently join them, and adviſed them to form the ſiege of Soiſin. They intrenched themſelves accordingly, and began an attack, for which they were not in the beſt manner provided, againſt what was then eſteemed one of the ſtrongeſt fortreſſes in Bohemia. The beſieged laughed at their vain efforts, and kept their uſual guard; while wet trenches, an hungry camp, the ſeverities of an inclement winter, and above all, the emperor's delay, introduced

troduced mutiny into the tents of the beſiegers, and diſſention into their councils.

In this ſituation were they ready to catch any alarm, when Ziſca approached with his army. The very ſight of his banners floating at a diſtance was ſufficient. They ſtruck their tents, and retreated with precipitation; burning the country as they fled; and curſing the emperor's breach of faith.

About the end of December, a full month after his appointed time, the emperor began his march. As he entered Bohemia, he received the firſt account of the retreat of the confederates. He determined however to proceed. He was at the head of a gallant army, the flower of which were 15,000 Hungarian horſe, eſteemed, at that time, the beſt cavalry in Europe, led by a Florentine officer of great experience. The infantry, which conſiſted of 25,000 men, were provided, as well as the cavalry, with every thing proper for a winter's campaign.

This army ſpread terror through all the eaſt of Bohemia; Ziſca being ſtill in the weſt purſuing the Germans. Wherever Sigiſmond marched, the magiſtrates laid their keys at his feet; and were treated with ſeve-

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rity or favour, according to their merits in his cauſe.

His career however was preſently checked. Ziſca with ſpeedy marches approached; and threw a damp upon him in the midſt of his ſucceſs. He choſe his ground however as well as he was able; and reſolved to try his fortune, once more, with that invincible chief.

No general paid leſs regard to the circumſtances of time and place than Ziſca. He ſeldom deſired more than to come up with his adverſary: the enthuſiaſtic fury of his ſoldiers ſupplied the reſt. There was not a man in his army who did not meet his enemy with that ſame invincible ſpirit, with which the martyr meets death; who did not in a manner preſs to be the foremoſt in that glorious band of heroes, whom the Almighty ſhould deſtine to the noble act of dying for their religion.—Such were the troops, which the ill-fate of Sigiſmond brought him now to encounter.

On the thirteenth of January, 1422, the two armies met, on a ſpacious plain, near Kamnitz. Ziſca appeared in the centre of his front line; guarded, or rather conducted by

by a horſeman on each ſide, armed with a poll-ax. His troops having ſung an hymn, with a determined coolneſs drew their ſwords, and waited for the ſignal.

Ziſca ſtood not long in view of the enemy when his officers had informed him, that the ranks were all well cloſed, he waved his ſabre round his head, which was the ſign of battle.

Hiſtorians ſpeak of the onſet of Ziſca's troops, as a ſhock beyond credibility; and it appears to have been ſuch on this occaſion. The imperial infantry hardly made a ſtand. In the ſpace of a few minutes they were diſordered beyond a poſſibility of being rallied. The cavalry made a feeble effort; but ſeeing themſelves unſupported, they wheeled round, and fled upon the ſpur.—Thus ſuddenly was the extent of the plain, as far as the eye could reach, ſpread with diſorder; the purſuers and the purſued mixed together, the whole one indiſtinct maſs of moving confuſion. Here and there might be ſeen, interſperſed, a few parties endeavouring to unite; but they were broken as ſoon as formed.

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The routed army fled towards the confines of Moravia; the Taborites, without intermiſſion, galling their rear. The river Igla, which was then frozen, oppoſed their flight. Here new diſaſters befel them. The bridge being immediately choked, and the enemy preſſing furiouſly on, many of the infantry, and in a manner the whole body of the cavalry attempted the river. The ice gave way; and not fewer than 2000 were ſwallowed up in the water.

Here Ziſca ſheathed his ſword, which had been ſufficiently glutted with blood; and returned in triumph to Tabor, laden with all the ſpoils, and all the trophies, which the moſt compleat victory could give.

The battle of Kamnitz having put Ziſca in peaceable poſſeſſion of the whole kingdom of Bohemia, he had now leiſure to pay a little more attention to his deſigned eſtabliſhment of a church.

He began now to aboliſh, in all places, the ceremonies of the popiſh worſhip. Prayers for the dead, images, holy-water, auricular confeſſion, holy-oil, ſacerdotal veſtments,

ments, faſts, and feſtivals, all theſe things he totally forbad. The pope's name he raſed from all public inſtruments; and denied his ſupremacy. Merit alone, he ſaid, ſhould give diſtinction among the prieſts of Bohemia; and they ſhould gain the reverence of the people by the ſanctity of their lives, not by their luxurious manner of living. Churchyards were forbidden alſo; as they had been brought into uſe, he thought, only to enrich the clergy. Purgatory too was expunged from the articles of belief.

From theſe things we may judge how much farther Huſs would, in all probability, have carried reformation; if he had had it in his power: for we may conſider Ziſca, as acting by his authority, and doing nothing, but what was conſonant to his expreſs doctrine; or might by fair inference be deduced from it.

We have no reaſon to ſuppoſe this military reformer had any bigotry in his temper: he ſeems not to have ſhewn any inclination to force the conſciences of any differing ſect; but to have left men at liberty to like or diſlike, to unite with him, or leave him, as they thought beſt. Nor was he by any means

means arbitrary in his impoſitions; but conſulted his friends, and fixed on nothing, but what found at leaſt a general concurrence.—He had the misfortune, notwithſtanding this moderation, to give great offence to many of the Bohemian reformers.

A variety of ſects is the natural conſequence of religious liberty; and mutual animoſity is toō often the conſequence of a variety of ſects. The miſchief is not, that men think differently, which is unavoidable; it is, their refuſing others that liberty, which they take themſelves. To reſtrain therefore the bad effects of bigotry, the prudent legiſlator protects an eſtabliſhment; and whatever toleration he may allow to ſectaries, (and the wiſeſt hath generally allowed the moſt,) he will however keep ſuch a reſtraint upon them, as may preſerve the tranquillity of the whole.

Among the ſeveral ſects, for there were ſeveral, which the reformation produced in Bohemia, one only was able to diſpute the point of ſuperiority with the Taborites. It was that of the Calixtins, ſo called from a word in the Latin language, which ſignifies a cup. They adminiſtered the Lord's ſup-

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per, it ſeems, in both kinds; but in other points receded leſs from the church of Rome, than any other Bohemian reformers.

The ſeeds of animoſity had long been ſown between this ſect, and the Taborites; but each was reſtrained by its fears of external danger. When an appearance of greater tranquillity ſucceeded; and Ziſca, taking the opportunity, began to innovate, and form the ſcheme of an eſtabliſhment, he ſoon found how warm an oppoſition he was likely to meet with from the Calixtins, whoſe party was by no means contemptible. Theſe ſectaries, who were chiefly confined to Prague, and its diſtrict, (and being the more embodied, could act with the greater force, were highly offended at being leſs taken notice of, than ſo conſiderable a party, in their own eyes, ſhould have been. Their clamour ſoon began, and in language ſufficiently warm: "Here, ſaid they, is a reformation indeed! inſtead of weeding and pruning the Lord's vineyard, as ought to have been done, the fence is totally taken away, and the wild boar of the wood is ſuffered to root it up. The church of Rome, however culpable in many reſpects, is at leaſt

leaſt decent in its worſhip: but the preſent ſyſtem of reformation hath not even decency to boaſt of."—From violent language, they proceeded, in the uſual progreſſion, to violent actions.

John the Premonſtratenſian, (ſo called from an order of monkery, in which he had ſpent a novitiate,) was the principal abettor of the Taborite party in Prague. He was a man of family, fortune, and character; all which conſpired to give him influence. This perſon conſidering Ziſca, during the preſent unſettled ſtate of Bohemia, as the leader, from whom he was properly to look for inſtructions, employed his whole intereſt in favour of that chief; and endeavoured to introduce the ſame regulations at Prague, which Ziſca had eſtabliſhed in other parts of the kingdom.

The principal magiſtrates of Prague were Calixtins; and unhappily men of little temper. It doth not appear, that John had diſcovered any unbecoming zeal; yet he ſoon found, that he had given great offence; and had ſufficient reaſon to fear, that if he brought himſelf within the ſhadow of a law, that law would be made to cruſh him.

Late

Late one evening, he and nine others, all chiefs of the Taborite party, were ſent for, by the magiſtrates, to the council-chamber, upon a pretence of ſettling ſomething with regard to public peace. They came without ſcruple; but found, on their entrance, an aſſembly which they little expected;—a court ſitting in form; before which they were immediately arraigned. The chief magiſtrate, without further ceremony, acquainted them, that in all ſtates it had been the practice, upon emergent occaſions, to diſpenſe with the formalities of law;—that their behaviour had been ſuch, as very greatly endangered the tranquillity of the city;—that ſufficient matter for the moſt public trial could be brought againſt them;—but that it was rather choſen for the ſake of peace, to proceed againſt them in this more private way.

Vain were all remonſtrances againſt theſe lawleſs proceedings: witneſſes were immediately called; and the facts alledged being proved, ſentence of death was haſtily paſſed upon them; and they were as haſtily hurried into an inner court of the building; where,

without any of the uſual circumſtances of decency, they were put to death.

It was impoſſible that ſo horrid a maſſacre, however privately tranſacted, ſhould eſcape the public knowledge. By noon the next day it was known in all parts of the city. Some authors mention its being diſcovered in a very extraordinary manner. The blood which ran in ſtreams from the headleſs trunks of theſe unfortunate men, having been forgotten in the confuſion of the action, made its way through the drains into the ſtreet, and proclaimed aloud the horrid deed. The populace, by whatever means acquainted with the affair, were immediately in an uproar: all parties were ſcandalized: even the Calixtins were too much confounded to make reſiſtance; while the Taborites took an ample revenge. They were not now actuated by thoſe mild virtues, which Huſs had diſcovered on a like occaſion. The ſpirit of the times was changed. They aſſembled with loud clamours before the houſes of the magiſtrates; forced open the doors; dragged them from their concealments; and haled them into the ſtreets; where, having expoſed them as ſpectacles,

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and reproached them with their crimes, they put them to a cruel death.

When the tumult of this affair was over, and men began to think coolly upon the matter, the Calixtins plainly saw how much injury their cause had suffered. It was true, that outrages had been committed on both sides. But the scale was by no means equal. The world would certainly be most forward to condemn the aggressor; and a manifest distinction would be made between an act of magistracy, and an act of mere popular fury. They concluded therefore, that the breach between them and the Taborites was irreparable; and that it was impossible for them to live happily under any government, in which Zisca presided.

These were the sentiments of the senate of Prague; in which assembly, after long deliberation, it was resolved to send deputies to the grand duke of Lithuania, and to offer him, in the name of the capital of Bohemia, the crown of that kingdom. The duke accepted their offer; and immediately sent troops to support his title.

This fatal dissention was looked upon as the expiring pang of the liberties of Bohe-

mia. It was not doubted but the emperor would ſeize this favourable opportunity; and having ſuffered the two parties thoroughly to weaken themſelves, would ſuddenly cruſh them both. It happened otherwiſe. Animated as theſe ſectaries were againſt each other, they were ſtill more ſo againſt the common enemy. Ziſca indeed ſatisfied himſelf with proteſting againſt the reſolutions of the ſenate of Prague; and, bearing, with his accuſtomed firmneſs, the ingratitude of his country, lay quiet in his camp at Tabor: while the Calixtins, in concert with the Lithuanians, ſeeing themſelves unmoleſted by him, began immediately to act againſt the emperor.

This party affected now to take the lead in all public affairs. But their ſucceſs was not anſwerable to their preſumption. The firſt enterprize they attempted was the ſiege of Charles-ſtone, a fortifyed poſt, where the emperor had found an opportunity to introduce a garriſon of 400 men. Before this place, which was by no means conſiderable, they conſumed full ſix months; and at length gave up the affair. The garriſon, during the whole ſiege, held them in the utmoſt

utmoſt contempt. Having taken ſome priſoners, in a ſally, they hung one of them over the wall, where the aſſault was fierceſt, with a fly-flapper in his hand, intimating, that this was ſufficient to baffle the utmoſt efforts of the beſiegers. Ziſca, in the mean time, ſat by, a calm ſpectator of what paſſed. There were ſome diſtempers, which, he thought, beſt cured themſelves; and he conſidered this diſorder as one of them. He knew the Calixtins had among them no leader of any capacity, in military affairs eſpecially; and he doubted not but they would ſoon feel the bad effects of ill concerted meaſures.

Indeed the Calixtins were not a little chagrined at the diſgrace they had ſuffered before Charles-ſtone. The ſucceſs of the invincible Ziſca, from whoſe auſpices they had now withdrawn themſelves, was, on this occaſion, an unpleaſing retroſpect: but they had ſoon ſeverer cauſe for reflection.

On the frontiers of Hungary Sigiſmond had a conference with the king of Poland; the ſubject of which was the ill-uſage he had received from the duke of Lithuania. Sigiſmond puſhed the affair with ſo much force

of argument, and insinuating address, that upon a proper application from his sovereign, the duke gave up his title to the crown of Bohemia, and withdrew his forces. It is probable he had now leisure to see things in a different light; and could discern more thorns than flowers scattered in the path-way to a throne; which he had not before observed, while dazzled with the glare of royalty. The Calixtins thus deprived of foreign aid, immediately sunk into their former insignificance. They became the objects also of that contempt of which the world is commonly so liberal upon the baffled schemes of imprudence and folly.

Ziska in the mean time, was in full credit with his party, and was earnestly requested to assume the crown of Bohemia himself, as a reparation for the insult he had received. No one in the kingdom, they assured him, had the power, if he had the inclination, to make the least opposition; and as for the emperor, they hoped he would soon be induced to drop his claim. But Ziska, whom even his enemies neither tax with avarice, nor ambition, steadily refused. "While you find me of service to your designs, said

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the diſintereſted chief, you may freely command both my counſels, and my ſword; but I will never accept any eſtabliſhed authority. On the contrary, my moſt earneſt advice to you is, when the perverſeneſs of your enemies will allow you peace, to truſt yourſelves no longer in the hands of kings; but to form yourſelves into a republic; which ſpecies of government only can ſecure your liberties."

It was near Chriſtmas 1422, when the Lithuanian army evacuated Bohemia. Sigiſmond was ſolicitous to have this impediment removed before the ſpring, when he propoſed to open a very active campaign. He had made, as uſual, great preparations; and intended once more to enter Bohemia with two ſeparate armies. With this view, he ſet the marquiſs of Miſnia at the head of a conſiderable body of Saxons, which were to penetrate by the way of Upper Saxony; while himſelf, at the head of another army, ſhould enter Moravia, on the ſide of Hungary. His deſign was, when he had overrun that country, which, upon the matter, was wholly in the intereſt of Ziſca, to join the marquiſs in the centre of Bohemia.

This was Sigiſmond's laſt effort; upon which he had exhauſted his whole ſtrength. It is ſurprizing indeed, how he had thus far found reſources in this ruinous and deſtructive war; conſidering him already in ſome degree impoveriſhed by an expenſive expedition againſt the Turks. But the amiable Sigiſmond could do, what the authority of the emperor could not have done. So inſinuating were his manners, ſo gentle and affable his behaviour, that he won the hearts of men, and drew them as he pleaſed. Had not religion oppoſed, nothing could have withſtood the claim of this accompliſhed prince to the crown of Bohemia.

On the other ſide, Ziſca was not backward in his preparations. He had ſome time before ſent Procop, an excellent young officer, to command in Moravia; in whom he had entire confidence, and to whoſe management he wholly intruſted the military affairs of that country; recommending to him particularly a cautious behaviour, and meaſures merely defenſive.

Procop was a citizen of Prague, of ordinary parentage; but his ſprightlineſs and beauty recommending him in his childhood

to

to an affluent family, he had been adopted into it. His new father ſpared no expence in his education; and having given him the beſt which his own country afforded, ſent him to travel into Spain, Italy, and other parts of Europe. After a conſiderable ſtay abroad, he returned home, a very accompliſhed perſon. The religious war ſoon after breaking out, he attached himſelf, as his inclination led him, to the fortunes of Ziſca; under whom, he not only expected to learn the rudiments of war, his favourite ſtudy, but reſolved to practiſe them likewiſe, in the ſervice of his country. From the moment he entered a camp, he gave himſelf up entirely to his profeſſion; in the knowledge of which he made a rapid progreſs. Ziſca ſoon diſcovered the uncommon talents of his young pupil; employed him frequently in matters, which required courage and punctuality; and at an age when men ſeldom arrive at the command of a regiment, ſet him over a province. His abilities indeed were ſuch, that Ziſca was in little pain about Moravia; at leaſt he hoped, that Procop would be able to keep the emperor employed, till he himſelf ſhould return from the frontiers of

of Saxony; whither he marched, with all his force, upon the firſt notice of the enemy's preparations.

The marquiſs had not yet taken the field. Ziſca, to ſtrike a terror into his troops, ravaged his borders; and boldly, in the face of his army, ſat down before Auſig.

Auſig is a ſtrong town ſituate upon the Elbe, nearly where that river leaves Bohemia. It had always ſhewn a particular attachment to the emperor; and was recommended by him in ſtrong terms, together with the bridge in its neighbourhood, to the protection of the marquiſs. It was a ſenſible mortification therefore to that general to ſee an enemy already at its gates; and he determined to riſk all, rather than leave it a prey.

Ziſca, who carried on his works with his uſual vigour, had brought the ſiege to its laſt ſtage, when the marquiſs appeared at the head of a great army, and offered him battle. Ziſca, whoſe maxim it was, never to decline fighting, accepted the challenge, though he had many difficulties to encounter. The marquiſs had a ſuperior army, and Ziſca was obliged ſtill more to thin his troops by leaving a large detachment to obſerve the town.

town. The Saxons beſides were advantageouſly poſted, having taken poſſeſſion of a riſing ground, which ſecured their flanks. A ſtrong wind alſo blew in the faces of the Taborites; which greatly weakened the flight of their arrows, while it added new force to thoſe of the enemy.

But Ziſca had little confidence in miſſive weapons. His whole line, with their poll-axes and ſabres, in their accuſtomed manner, made an impetuous attack upon the enemy. The Saxons, receiving them in good order, ſtood firm, and gave them a very ſevere check. This was a reception wholly unknown to the Taborites; who had ever been uſed to bear down all before them; and in theſe new circumſtances were at a loſs how to act. They retreated ſome paces, as if aſtoniſhed at the novelty of the thing. —This critical moment the Saxons ſhould have ſeized, while the blaſt, yet fluttering in the ſails, ſeemed to heſitate, on which ſide to give the ſwell. Had they moved forward at this inſtant, it is probable the Taborites had never recovered from their ſurprize. But inſtead of a general charge, they ſtood motionleſs; looking upon the enemy, as if they had done enough by

by not ſuffering themſelves to be beaten.—Ziſca, little leſs than inſpired, had a compleat idea of the whole affair; and being conducted to the front line, which ſtood yet unbroken, he cried out as he rode along, "I thank you my fellow-ſoldiers, for all your paſt ſervices,—if you have now done your utmoſt, let us retire." This noble rebuke ſtung them to the ſoul. Every veteran gnaſhed his teeth with indignation, graſped his ſword, and preſſed forward; cloſing, hand to hand, with the enemy, in the true temper of determined courage.

The combat, thus renewed, became ſoon unequal. For ſome time the Saxons ſtill maintained a feeble fight. Four of their principal officers, endeavouring to reſtore the battle, were cut in pieces at the head of their diſmayed battalions. The whole army ſoon after, in every part, gave ground: a retreat, a rout, a maſſacre ſucceeded. The carnage of the field was terrible. Not fewer than 9000 Saxons were left dead upon the ſpot. Ziſca is taxed, however juſtly, with great cruelty, after all reſiſtance was over. It is certain he never bought a victory ſo dear.

From

From this ſcene of blood he recalled his troops to new fields of glory. "We muſt ſleep to night, cryed he, within the walls of Auſig." Thither the triumphant army carried the news of their victory. Ziſca would grant no conditions; the governor was allowed half an hour to deliberate, whether he would ſurrender at diſcretion, or take the conſequence. He choſe the ſafer meaſure; and the Taborites were quietly in their quarters in Auſig before the cloſe of the evening.—Theſe two great events conſecrated the 22d of April, for many years in Bohemia.

The next day Ziſca ordered the town to be diſmantled; that it might no longer be a receptacle to his enemies: He broke down likewiſe the ſtately bridge over the Elbe; to cut off, as much as poſſible, all communication with Saxony.

Having thus ſettled every thing in the eaſt of Bohemia, where he had been kept longer than he expected, and having freed that country even from the apprehenſion of danger, he returned with his victorious army to the aſſiſtance of Procop.

That

That general had ſufficient buſineſs upon his hands. The emperor appeared early upon the frontiers of Moravia; and after ſome irregular motions, ſat down before Pernitz.

Procop with his little army attended all his movements; and practiſed with admirable ſkill thoſe leſſons, which he had juſt received. He was confined however to the minutiæ of war: he could not hurt, he could only teize, his unweildy adverſary. If the emperor offered him battle, his Parthian brigades, unincumbered with baggage, retreated ſuddenly to the mountains. If the emperor returned to his former enterprize, Procop was inſtantly in his rear; and being acquainted with the country, beſet every avenue to his camp with ſo much judgment, that Sigiſmond was obliged to ſend large detachments, and often to run great hazard in procuring proviſions. In a word, Procop ſhewed himſelf, during the whole campaign, a complete maſter of defenſive war; and gave the emperor ſuch a check, as he little expected from ſo inferior a force.

In the mean time the town behaved with equal ſpirit. Sigiſmond had now lain eight weeks before it, and had not yet made the leaſt

leaſt impreſſion either upon the walls, or the garriſon; though he had endeavoured his utmoſt, by his engines and his menaces, to ſhake both. He was obliged therefore to ſubmit to his ill-fortune; and, drawing lines round the place, contented himſelf with ſtraitening its quarters, and ſhutting it up by a blockade.

In this deſign he was again unfortunate. He had reduced the town to great extremity, when, by one of thoſe maſterly ſtrokes, which may deceive the greateſt captain, Procop drawing his attention to another quarter, forced his lines in an unſuſpected part, and threw ſuccours into the place.

This was a ſevere blow to Sigiſmond. His work was entirely to begin a new; the ſummer was wearing apace; the Saxons were totally defeated; and Ziſca was returning with a victorious army. —Agitated by theſe reflections; and having nothing in proſpect but new diſaſters, he gave up his deſign, and retreated. —Thus was Bohemia delivered once more from the fear of her enemies; and her champion, after a ſhort, but active campaign, was allowed to ſheath his ſword.

The news of Sigiſmond's retreat met

Ziſca

Ziſca near Prague. As the troops, having made forced marches from Auſig, had been harraſſed with intolerable fatigue, he thought it proper to give them a few days reſt. He incamped therefore within three leagues of Prague; and attended by a ſmall body of horſe, took up his own reſidence in the city. He had not been at Prague ſince the late diſturbances, and hoped, by his preſence, to diſſipate what might ſtill remain of ill-humour in the minds of the inhabitants. He was however miſtaken. His preſence, inſtead of reſtoring harmony, appeared plainly to give new offence. He ſoon had flagrant inſtances of the diſtate of the people; which he had the magnanimity to diſregard, ſtill expecting it would wear off. On the contrary, it increaſed daily, diſcovering itſelf in the moſt groſs affronts, and at length in the moſt violent outrages.

At a very unſeaſonable hour, ſomewhat after midnight, he was alarmed by an officer of his guard, who entering his chamber, with a diſturbed countenance, acquainted him, that he had no time to loſe,—that the perfidious townſmen were preparing to ſeize him. Ziſca aſking a few queſtions, and receiving

ceiving ſuch anſwers as left him little room to doubt, immediately got on horſe-back; ordering at the ſame time, a haſty trumpet to ſound *to horſe*, through the quarters. The troops, which conſiſted of about 400 men, repaired directly, with ſuch circumſtances of diſorder, as may be imagined, to the great ſquare. Not a man knew the cauſe of this ſudden alarm. While they ſtood enquiring one of another, and each forming ſuch conjectures, as his imagination ſuggeſted, their ears were ſuddenly ſtruck with the ſound of bells, which burſt inſtantaneouſly from every tower of the city, in one general peal. Immediately on the ſignal, they were attacked by multitudes of people, crouding through every avenue and ſtreet; but in that tumultuary manner, which plainly diſcovered a diſconcerted ſcheme. The Taborites, placing their father, as they commonly called Ziſca, in the centre, formed round him, as the exigence would allow; and defended themſelves with great firmneſs. Indeed the enemy made no extraordinary efforts; they ſeemed contented with blocking up the avenues of the ſquare, and throwing a few weapons, which did little execution. If any approach-

ed nearer, and attempted a ruder affault, a few horſemen were ordered to ride in among them; who generally drove them back ſome paces. But this was only the reflux of a tide, which preſently returned.

In the mean time day-light appeared; and ſhewed the Taborites the deſperate circumſtances of their ſituation. Ziſca, who was exactly informed of every thing, having called his officers about him, reſolved (as the only expedient in the preſent exigence,) to endeavour to force a way through the high ſtreet, which led to the camp.

In conſequence of this reſolution, a vigorous attack was made. The citizens were preſently beaten off; and the Taborites gallantly fought their way through all oppoſition.

In the middle of the ſtreet their impetuoſity received a check. There a barricado had been begun, the haſty work of that tumultuous morning. The materials indeed had been rather brought together, than put into form. It ſerved however to retard the violence of Ziſca. Many of his ſoldiers were obliged to diſmount, to clear the paſſage; and could not afterwards recover thei horſes:

horſes: all order was broken; and, the enemy cloſing on every ſide, a ſcene of great confuſion enſued.

At length the fortune of Ziſca prevailed. With the loſs of ſome men, though of fewer than might have been expected, he forced the barricado, and made his way to the gate.

Here the enemy endeavoured to form a ſecond time; and a new ſcene of tumult followed. But the gate was at length burſt open; and Ziſca, at the head of his little troop, ſallied out in triumph. He was purſued by all the force, that could be brought out againſt him; which conſiſted of ſome thouſands; againſt whom he maintained a flying fight with ſuch intrepidity, as made none of them very forward to cloſe in upon him. His diſmounted troopers, who had been of ſo much ſervice in opening a paſſage, were now of equal diſadvantage in retarding his march: notwithſtanding which, the order of it continued unbroken.

In the midſt of this victorious retreat, an unforeſeen accident almoſt proved fatal to him. The enemy were making one of their boldeſt efforts, when, Ziſca being ſeparated

from his company in the confuſion of the attack, his horſe, undirected, plunged into a moraſs. His perſon being conſpicuous, he was preſently ſurrounded; and a furious conteſt enſued; in which the Taborites were victorious; and had the good fortune to recover their fainting general.

The route, which the Taborites took, led acroſs a fair plain, or rather valley, environed with riſing grounds, which, approaching each other, at the farther end, formed a narrow paſs. Here Ziſca, who had been miſerably harraſſed along the plain, and had more open country beyond the defile, determined to make a ſtand; thinking his deſperate circumſtances a ſufficient apology for the appearance of raſhneſs. Having drawn up his little troop therefore with all the advantage which accrued from his ſituation, he preſented himſelf to the enemy; who did not decline an engagement.

Hiſtorians relate this battle with very improbable circumſtances. We are told, that Ziſca not only gained the victory, but that he put to the ſword above 3000 of the enemy. It is not unlikely, that if the ſlaughter from the beginning be taken into the account,

count, the Calixtin party might looſe that number.—It is certain however, that Ziſca made good his retreat; and arrived in ſafety at his camp.

Great was the conſternation in Prague, when the fugitives from this unfortunate attack returned without their prey. The Calixtin-party at firſt intended to have cruſhed Ziſca without diſturbance; not doubting but the diſſipation of his ſect would follow. When that was found impracticable, they determined, at any rate, to cruſh him. Their fraud and force being equally ineffectual, they ſaw themſelves in deſperate circumſtances. They had provoked a very powerful enemy, whom they could not withſtand; and from whom they had every thing to fear.--The die however was thrown; and they muſt accommodate their game as they were able.

In the mean time Ziſca, calling his troops together, acquainted them in form with the whole tranſaction; and having raiſed in them ſuch ſentiments of indignation as he wiſhed to inſpire, he immediately ſtruck his tents, and like the injured Roman of old, marched

directly to the city, and incamped under its walls.

Before he attempted force, he ſent in a trumpet, requiring, in very ſtern language, that the adviſers, and chief inſtruments of the late villainous aſſault ſhould be put into his hands. But the guilt of that action was ſo univerſal, that it was impoſſible to ſay, who was involved the deepeſt. Inſtead of complying therefore with the order of Ziſca, the miſerable inhabitants choſe rather to try perſuaſive arts; endeavouring by every method to ſoften the chief, and move the compaſſion of the troops. Intreaties, promiſes, and prayers were addreſſed by the magiſtrates to Ziſca; while the populace, from the walls, made the ſame earneſt application to the ſoldiers. Some pleaded kindred, or alliances, or the rights of hoſpitality affectionately performed. Many with tears deplored their wretched fate; proteſting before God and man, that they had no hand in the late commotion: while numbers, who had a right to the protection of Ziſca, from their adherence to his cauſe, were deſcribing their doors, and houſes, or agreeing upon ſecret marks, and pledges, by which they might

eſcape

eſcape the impending vengeance; intreating, at the ſame time, one for a friend, another for a ſon, or near relation, whom his unhappy fate had involved in the general guilt.

But Ziſca continued ſtern and immoveable. He was perſuaded the Calixtin-party could by no means, be depended on; and that they would never unite in any friendly league. He determined therefore to take this opportunity of leiſure from his other enemies, to ſubdue them thoroughly; aſſuring himſelf, that till this ſhould be effected, the accompliſhment of his great deſigns would remain uncompleat.

The troops were more flexible. They conſidered not the affair with the foreſight of their chief; and having only before their eyes the preſent ſcene of diſtreſs, began to murmur at the work, in which they were engaged; and at the ſeverity of him, who had engaged them in it. "They would not be the inſtruments of the deſtruction of a city, which was the glory of their country.—Their general might ſeek other miniſters of his vengeance.—They would offer their lives a willing ſacrifice againſt the unjuſt attempts of their enemies; but

no one ſhould oblige them to take up arms againſt their brethren."

Theſe whiſpers ſoon reached the ears of Ziſca,—the firſt ſeditious whiſpers he had ever heard. His orders he found hourly leſs punctually obeyed; he was accoſted with inſolent ſpeeches, as he paſſed along the lines; and mutinous tumults gathered about his tent. In a word, he ſaw the contagion ſpreading apace; and immediate need of a remedy. Calling his troops therefore together, he endeavoured to aſſuage the riſing mutiny, by ſhewing them the neceſſity of ſevere meaſures. The Calixtins had now twice, he told them, almoſt ruined the common cauſe; and would be ready to ruin it again on any future occaſion. The emperor, he ſaid, was always on the watch; and would be glad to widen their miſunderſtandings, and take the advantage of them. For himſelf, he had no intention, he told them, to lay the city in blood and deſolation. All he propoſed was to make himſelf entire maſter of it; and when he had it in his power, he would liſten to the ſuggeſtions of pity, and would temper ſeverity with mercy.

"This,

"This, my fellow-ſoldiers, ſaid he, concluding his ſpeech, is my intention: but if it ſhall ſeem more agreeable to you to act with greater lenity; if you ſhall chuſe to reach out to theſe bloody men even an unlimited mercy, I ſhall conſider myſelf only as your miniſter: and whether you chuſe war or peace, I am ready with my utmoſt power to ſecond that choice.—One thing only let me requeſt, for the ſake of all our mutual labours, and mutual glories, let me requeſt, that theſe unhappy diviſions amongſt us may ceaſe; and that whether we ſheath our ſwords, or keep them drawn, the world may know, that we are united in our councils, as well as our arms; and that Ziſca, and his companions, have only one common cauſe."

In ſuch ſoothing language did the prudent chief addreſs himſelf to the prejudices of his ſoldiers. His ſpeech had the deſired effect. They who did not hear it, caught the fire from thoſe who did. The whole army was inſtantly animated with a new ſpirit; and the camp rang with profeſſions of obedience, and acclamations of praiſe.

It

It was now near ſunſet; too late to take the full advantage of the ardour of the troops. Orders therefore were given for an aſſault early the next morning. Every thing was prepared. The regiments, in their ſeveral ſtations, reſted upon their arms; and Ziſca retired to his tent, big with the thoughts of the ſucceeding day.—Many were the reflections he made; and many the compunctions he felt, when he thus found himſelf upon the point of laying waſte the capital of his country.—But the liberties of Bohemia urged him upon this harſh ſervice.

As he was ruminating on theſe things, it being now paſt midnight, a perſon was introduced to him by the officer of his guard, who earneſtly deſired a private audience. Ziſca preſently knew him to be the celebrated Roqueſan; an eccleſiaſtic, who, from the meaneſt circumſtances of birth and fortune, had raiſed himſelf, by his great talents, to have the moſt perſonal conſequence of any man in Prague. Roqueſan came a deputy from his fellow-citizens, now reduced to the loweſt deſpair. They had good intelligence from

from Ziſca's camp; and well knew the fatal reſolution of the preceding evening.

Of what paſſed between theſe two chiefs, on this occaſion, we have no particulars. Roqueſan however inſiſted on ſuch arguments, as over-powered the reſolution of Ziſca; and a thorough reconciliation took place. An anonymous French hiſtorian, who wrote the life of Ziſca, mentions terms of agreement; but as theſe are unlikely, and, as far as appears, unauthorized, it is of little moment to inſert them. It is probable, that Ziſca would not ſo eaſily have been brought to a reconciliation, had not the late mutiny among his troops given a new turn to his counſels.

While theſe things were acting at Prague, the diſtreſſed Sigiſmond was in great perplexity. The battle of Auſig had greatly ſhaken that conſtancy, which had thus far ſupported him. Six times, in three campaigns, he had been vanquiſhed in the open field: his towns had been raviſhed from him, and his provinces laid waſte. He acknowledged the ſuperior talents of his adverſary; and was quelled by that noble and unconquered ſpirit, which animated the cauſe of liberty.

liberty, The late diſſention had, in ſome degree, revived his hopes: but he was ſcarce informed of the circumſtances of the quarrel, when he was informed of the reconciliation likewiſe. Every ray of hope therefore being now excluded, he ſubmitted to his hard fate; and reſolving on any terms, to give peace to his bleeding country, ſent deputies to Ziſca, requeſting him to ſheath his ſword, and name his conditions; offering him, at the ſame time, for himſelf, what might have ſatisfyed the moſt graſping ambition.

Ziſca was equally deſirous of a reconcilition. He had taken up arms with a view only to obtain peace, and was heartily glad of an occaſion to lay them down. He returned a meſſage to the emperor, full of that reſpectful language, with which the great can eaſily cover enmity; tho' at the ſame time breathing that ſpirit, which became a chief in the cauſe of liberty.

After a few couriers had paſſed, a place of congreſs was appointed; and Ziſca ſet out to meet the emperor, attended by the principal officers of his army. It gave Europe a ſubject for various converſation, when this great man,

man, whom one unfortunate battle would have reduced to the condition of a rebel, was ſeen paſſing through the midſt of Bohemia, to treat with his ſovereign, like a ſovereign, upon equal terms.

But Ziſca lived not to put a finiſhing hand to this treaty. His affairs obliged him to take this route through a part of the country, at which the plague at that time raged. At the caſtle of Priſcow, where he had engaged to hold an aſſembly of the ſtates of that diſtrict, the fatal contagion ſeized him, and put an end to his life, on the ſixth of October 1424, — at a time, when, all his labours being ended, and his great purpoſes almoſt compleated, (ſuch was the courſe of providence) he had only to enjoy thoſe liberties, and that tranquillity, which his virtue had ſo nobly purchaſed.

Some authors write, that, being aſked by thoſe around him, a little before his death, where he would have his remains depoſited? he anſwered where they pleaſed — that it was indifferent to him, whether they were thrown out to the vultures, or conſigned to the tomb.

We

We are informed too, that upon his death-bed he ordered his ſkin to be made into a drum; "The very ſound of which, ad ded he, will diſperſe your enemies." It is probable this ſpeech is a mere fiction: ſuch vaunting, agreeing ill with that reſerved character, which Ziſca had ever maintained. Morery indeed tells us, that the drum was actually made; that it was uſed in battle by the Taborites; and that it had the full effect expected from it; though at the ſame time, with a ridiculous gravity, he informs us, that he doth not ſuppoſe it was owing to any ſupernatural power, with which that inſtrument was endowed.—The whole ſeems an idle tale. It may even be queſtioned, whether the ſkin of a body in that morbed ſtate, which the plague occaſions, is capable of being cured: or if it were, we can hardly imagine, that any people could be ſo infatuated, as firſt to manufacture, and afterwards to carry about with them the remains of an infected carcaſe.

The beſt accounts inform us, that he was buried in the great church at Czaſlow in Bohemia; where a monument was erected to his memory, with an inſcription to this purpoſe; HERE

HERE LIES JOHN ZISCA;
WHO HAVING DEFENDED HIS COUNTRY
AGAINST THE ENCROACHMENTS
OF PAPAL TYRANNY,
RESTS IN THIS HALLOWED PLACE
IN DESPITE
OF THE POPE.

The greateſt, indeed the only ſtain on the character of Ziſca, is his cruelty. Of this his enemies make loud complaints; and his friends, it muſt be confeſſed, are very ill able to clear him. Againſt the popiſh clergy, it is certain, he acted with great ſeverity. Many of them he put to death, and more he baniſhed; plundering and confiſcating their poſſeſſions, without any reſerve.

They who are moſt inclined to exculpate this rigour, perſuade us, that he conſidered theſe eccleſiaſtics not as heretics, but as civil offenders;—as men, who were accountable for all the blood, which had been ſpilt in Bohemia; and on whoſe heads the juſtice of an injured nation ought deſervedly to fall.

But the beſt apology perhaps may be taken from the manners of the age, in which

which he lived. In thoſe barbarous times, and among thoſe barbarous nations, rough nature appeared in its rudeſt form. Friends and enemies were treated from the heart, without that gloſs of decency, which arts, and civility have introduced.

Some allowance alſo may be made for the peculiar violence, which naturally attends civil diſſentions; in which every injury is greatly heightened, and every paſſion immoderately moved.

Upon the whole, Ziſca was by no means animated with that true ſpirit of Chriſtianity, which his amiable maſter, Huſs, had diſcovered on all occaſions. His fierce temper ſeems to have been modelled rather upon the old Teſtament, than the new; and the genius of that religion in a great degree to have taken hold of him, which in its animoſities call'd down fire from heaven.

His capacity was vaſt; his plans of action extenſive; and the vigour of his mind in executing thoſe plans aſtoniſhing. Difficulties with him were motives. They rouſed up latent powers, proportioned to the emergence. Even blindneſs could not check the ardour of his ſoul; and what was ſaid of the

the Grecian Timolean, under the ſame miſfortune, (whoſe character indeed he reſembled in many inſtances) may with equal juſtice be applyed to him; *hanc calamitatem ita moderate tulit, ut neq; eum querentem quiſquam audierit, neq; eo minus privatis, publiciſq; rebus interfuerit.* His military abilities were equal to what any age hath produced; and as ſuch they are acknowledged by all hiſtorians. Nor do we admire him leſs as a politician. If the great man was ſeen in the conduct, and courage, which he diſcovered in the field; he was equally ſeen in governing, by his own native authority, a land of anarchy; and in drawing to one point the force of a divided nation.

Nor was the end, which he propoſed, unworthy of his great actions. Utterly devoid both of ambition and avarice, he had no aim but to eſtabliſh, upon the ruins of eccleſiaſtical tyranny, the civil and religious liberties of his country.

The END.

THE

CONCLUSION

OF THE

BOHEMIAN AFFAIRS.

HAVING thus brought the affairs of the Bohemian reformers to a glorious iſſue under Ziſca, it may be proper to continue the narration, in few words, till this great ſtruggle between the contending parties was decided.

After the death of Ziſca, the flames of war kindled anew. It is probable, the emperor, on this great event, might ſuſpend, and finally break off the treaty, expecting better conditions.

Procop, who had ſo greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in Moravia, and was eſteemed the

ableſt of Ziſca's generals, naturally took the lead after his deceaſe. This chief ſuſtained the character he had acquired. Indeed the Taborite armies were now ſo formed, and diſciplined by the care, and abilities of Ziſca; ſo inured to all the difficulties of their profeſſion, and ſo formidable to their enemies, that the reputation of future generals was in a great meaſure Ziſca's due; who had laid a foundation, on which even inferior talents might ſucceſsfully build.

But Procop had talents to form a ſcheme, which fortune had given him only to compleat. Yet he had ſtill great difficulties to encounter. To the old enemies of his cauſe a new one was added. The pope, incited by the clamours of the religious, reared his holy banners; and a formidable army under a cardinal-general, was ſent into Bohemia. But his eminence ſhared the fate of all his predeceſſors in this war; and the Bohemian arms triumphed, wherever they were oppoſed.

To the military inventions of Ziſca, Procop added an improvement of his own. He introduced armed chariots into his lines, which ſerved as a ſort of moving rampart; through

through the interſtices of which his troops charged and retired at pleaſure. On other occaſions, his chariots would take a ſudden wheel, and incloſe whole battalions of the enemy; which, thus environed, were deſtined to certain ſlaughter. He found them ſtill more uſeful in his ravaging excurſions. They ſerved, at the ſame time, as a defence to his marauders, and as waggons to carry off the plunder.

Procop had now continued in arms ſix years. His campaigns, though not diſtinguiſhed by thoſe illuſtrious actions, which had marked the campaigns of Ziſca, were however generally ſucceſsful. He had not indeed thoſe opportunities of performing ſplendid actions. The emperor, waſted by his vaſt expences, had of late ſuffered the war to languiſh; hoping to procure thoſe advantages from repoſe, which he could not force by his arms. He was well acquainted with the mutual animoſities of the Taborites and the Calixtins, who agreed in nothing, but in oppoſing him: and he thought a little leiſure, as it had hitherto done, might ripen their diſſentions. Procop, he knew, was an able general; but he had a mean

opinion of him, as a politician—as a man either of temper, or addreſs to aſſuage or manage the rage of parties. Upon the whole, he had reaſon to hope, that time might produce ſome happy criſis in his favour. That criſis now approached.

In the year 1431, the council of Baſil aſſembled. Hither the Taborites were invited with a profuſion of civil language. But they received the ſummons with great indignation. It was the univerſal cry, "That general councils were general peſts;—that they were called only in ſupport of eccleſiaſtical tyranny;—and that no credit was due to ſuch partial conventions."

Procop however, with a magnanimity which could not brook the imputation of refuſing a challenge of any kind, determined to attend the council: and when his friends urged the danger; and adviſed him at leaſt to ſecure himſelf by a ſufficient paſsport; they only made him the more reſolute in his purpoſe: "Paſſport! cried he, need we other than our ſwords?"

Thus reſolved and accompanied by Coſca, another leader of the Taborites, he ſet out, at the head of a regiment of horſe. The whole

whole city of Baſil came out to meet ſo extraordinary a deputation. Every one was earneſt to compare the faces of theſe gallant heroes with the actions they had performed; and ſaw, or thought they ſaw, ſomething more than human in thoſe countenances, the very appearance of which had put armies to flight. The two deputies were received by the magiſtrates at the gate of the city; and the fathers of the council (ſo great a change, ſince the times of Huſs, had the influence of power produced) paid them ſuch honours, as were paid only to crowned heads. After many conferences, which ended in attaching them the more firmly to their own opinions, they returned into Bohemia.

The council however had an aftergame to play. Upon the departure of the Taborite chiefs, they ſent deputies, choſen from the moſt eminent of their body, into Bohemia; who had in charge (out of the great regard the council had for the Bohemians, and their earneſt zeal to draw them to the true faith) to diſcuſs thoſe points at full leiſure in Prague, which the multiplicity of affairs would not allow at Baſil.—This was

their pretence: their real deſign was, to divide the Bohemians; and to kindle again the old animoſity, which had ſo nearly proved fatal to both parties.

This buſineſs was carryed on with that ſingular addreſs, for which the court of Rome hath ever been remarkable in negotiations of this kind; and was at length, by the aſſiduity of theſe good cardinals, brought to a happy iſſue. A great party, under Mignard, a man of courage and abilities, appeared in arms againſt Procop; and the fury of civil diſcord began to rage in all its violence.

The Taborites had now ample occaſion to regret the clemency, which had formerly been ſhewn at Prague; and remembered, with compunction of heart, how often their great chief would inſiſt, that no peaceful ſettlement could be obtained, till the factious ſpirit of that city ſhould be ſubdued.—But it was now too late for reflection.

Procop however, unconcerned, at the head of veterans, whoſe valour he had known during ten campaigns, met his adverſary with aſſurance of ſucceſs. "You have not now, my fellow-ſoldiers, cryed he, diſciplined Imperialiſts,

Imperialiſts, and hardy Saxons to oppoſe. Thoſe hoſtile banners belong to troops enervated by city-luxury; and inſpired by faction, inſtead of courage. You have only to begin the attack: their own guilty conſciences will do the reſt."

The cautious Mignard felt, with ſecret joy, the prognoſtics of ſucceſs: he ſaw the confidence of his impetuous enemy; and with the addreſs of a more experienced leader improved it fully to his own advantage.

On the plains of Broda this fatal quarrel was decided. Here the Taborite army, drawn by their ardour into inſuperable difficulties, after a well-fought day, was exterminated. Here fell the gallant Procop, vainly endeavouring to reſtore a broken battle; and with him fell the liberties of his country.

The battle of Broda opened an eaſy way to the ſucceſſion of Sigiſmond. The Calixtin party having gratifyed their revenge, now paid the price. Reduced by their victory, they were no longer in a condition to oppoſe the emperor. Conquerors, and conquered ſubmitted to his yoke; and he was crowned peaceably

peaceably at Prague, amidſt the acclamations of his enemies.

It would be unpardonable ingratitude in a proteſtant writer not to acknowledge the lenity, which attended this ſudden revolution. Sigiſmond, with a magnanimity, which few princes could exert, (it would be invidious to aſcribe his behaviour to meaner motives) entered Bohemia, not as a conquered province, but as a patrimony, which had deſcended to him quietly from his anceſtors. Such of the Taborites as had eſcaped the carnage of that fatal day, conſiſting chiefly of a few thin garriſons, in all about 6000 men, he took under his protection; ſuffered them to live peaceably at Tabor; and ſhewing them favour beyond any of the Bohemian reformers, (many of whom met with rougher uſage) allowed them with unparallelled generoſity, the uſe of their own religion.

Some years after, Eneas Sylvius, reſiding with a public character, in Bohemia, had the curioſity to viſit Tabor. The account he hath left us of the remains of this brave people is not a little entertaining. The reader will

will make allowance for the zeal of a popiſh writer.

Returning, ſays he, to Prague, our route brought us near Tabor, which we had all an inclination to viſit: but not knowing what ſort of reception we might meet with, we ſent a meſſenger to acquaint the magiſtrates of the town with our names and our intentions. We had a very obliging anſwer; and the principal inhabitants came out to meet us. But ſo wretched a ſet of people I never ſaw. Their dreſs was rude, beyond what is commonly ſeen among the loweſt vulgar; ſome of them were clad even in ſkins. They rode on horſeback; but their horſes, and furniture were of a piece with their dreſs. Their perſons too were juſt as extraordinary: ſcarce one of them, but was disfigured by ſome frightful maim. One wanted an eye, another an arm, a third a leg. Their reception of us was equally void of every appearance either of form or politeneſs. In their rude manner, however, they offered us each a trifling preſent; and brought us, by way of refreſhment, wine and fiſh. We then entered the town. Over the gate ſtood a ſtatue of Ziſca; and near it

an

an angel holding a cup; as an emblem of their maintaining the doctrine of the two ſpecies. Their houſes were very ordinary; built chiefly of clay, and wood; no regularity, no form of ſtreets; but every houſe ſtanding by itſelf. The inſides however were better furniſhed than the outſides ſeemed to promiſe: they were inriched with the ſpoils of conquered provinces; which, to the everlaſting diſgrace of the emperor Sigiſmond, were never reſtored. In their great ſquare ſtood various forms of military engines; with a view, as we ſuppoſe, to ſtrike a terror into the neighbouring country: tho' the people were become quite pacific, applying themſelves only to huſbandry, and mechanic arts. In this ſquare too ſtood their temple, as they call it; a wooden ſtructure, ſcarce ſuperior to a country barn. Here they preached to the people: here they expounded their doctrines; here ſtood their unconſecrated altar; and here even the holy ſacrament was adminiſtred. Their prieſts were unornamented, except by beards of an immoderate length. Tythes were entirely diſallowed. The clergy had no property. They were ſupply'd with all neceſſaries, in kind, by

by the people. Images were wholly forbidden. No prayers to ſaints were permitted; no holidays; no ſet faſts; no canonical hours. Half the ſacraments were diſcarded. Religious houſes were abominations. Their baptiſmal font was unconſecrated. Their dead buryed in unhallowed ground. They were punctual however in their attendance upon divine ſervice; and had very ſevere penalties to inforce a reverence to it.

The next day, upon our departure, the magiſtrates of this wretched town came again to wait upon us, and returned us thanks for our viſit. Their ſpeech, on this occaſion, had more of politeneſs in it than their appearance ſeemed to promiſe.

The END.

THE

A

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING thus given the reader what appeared moſt worthy of his notice with regard to theſe eminent reformers, whoſe lives I have attempted, it may be proper to acquaint him with thoſe helps, and authorities, which I have commonly uſed. I have indeed taken from other writers, beſides thoſe I ſhall mention; but I have generally in that caſe quoted them in the text, if the incident was of conſequence.

In the life of Wicliff, the labour of collecting was made very eaſy to me by the induſtry and accuracy of Dr. Lewis, who hath brought together, in his life of that reformer, great plenty of materials. Had he been as happy in the diſpoſition of them, I ſhould not have thought the new lights, which I have endeavoured to throw upon this great character, a ſufficient apology for my engaging in the ſame work.

Lord

Lord Cobham's life was collected from the rolls of parliament, Bale's chronicle, Fox's martyrology, and our earlieſt Engliſh hiſtorians. With relation both to Wicliff and Lord Cobham, I examined the manuſcripts of the Britiſh muſeum, where I hoped to have found a great variety of materials. I found ſome; but fewer than I expected.

Lenfant's very accurate, and judicious hiſtory of the council of Conſtance, was of great uſe to me in the lives of John Huſs, and Jerome of Prague. I examined the earlieſt and beſt accounts I could meet with, of the progreſs of the reformation in Bohemia; but in all conteſted points I relyed chiefly on Lenfant's judgment, whom I may venture to call my principal guide.

With regard to Ziſca, I was more at a loſs. It hath been the misfortune of this chief to have had no ſober hiſtorians. Eneas Sylvius, the principal, and from whom the generality of writers have taken their leading facts, though a courtier, ſeems to have written in the ſpirit of a monk. Credulous, and prejudiced, he appears ſcarce to deſerve a higher rank in letters than our own legendary writers. Where Lenfant's judgment aſſiſted me,

me, I followed without fear; but where he forſook me, I was obliged to wander among a variety of ſtrange, and inconſiſtent accounts; and with ſome difficulty picked out a probable road. I make no queſtion but Ziſca won as many battles, and took as many towns as are aſcribed to him; and that the conſtituent parts of his hiſtory reſt upon a good foundation of credit; but his actions are related ſo much in the air of romance, that I found it neceſſary, in the painter's language, to *keep down* the colouring as much as poſſible. Livy, ſpeaking of ſome romantic writings of his own country, from which he was obliged to copy; cries out, *Hæc ad oſtentationem ſcenæ gaudentis miraculis aptiora, quam ad fidem.* I am afraid in ſome inſtances, this character is too nearly allied to the writings I have been deſcribing.

I cannot cloſe this poſtſcript without a few ſtrictures on the moral, as well as literary character of Eneas Sylvius. This zealot, in his uſual exaggerated manner, hath taken great liberties with the reformers; indulging himſelf in a rancour of language againſt them, which muſt be offenſive to every ſober Chriſtian. I could produce a variety of examples;

amples; but ſhall content myſelf with one. The reader may recollect the account he gives of the Taborites after the ruin of their affairs; from which any impartial perſon would be led to conclude, that they were a brave, liberal, inoffenſive, hoſpitable, and religious people. How greatly therefore are we ſurprized to find our author concluding to this effect.

"I have now given you, ſays he, ſome account of this habitation of the devil, this temple of Belial, this kingdom of Lucifer.—I had imagined indeed, that this people differed from us only in one, or two points: but I find them confirmed heretics, mere infidels, little better than atheiſts, and without any form of religion.—Every hereſy, every impiety, every blaſphemy, which hath infected Chriſtendom, hath fled hither for refuge; and hath here met with a ſafe aſylum.—For my own part, I thought myſelf in a land beyond the frozen ocean, among Barbarians, even among Cannibals; for in all the earth there are ſurely no ſuch monſtrous people as the Taborites.—Yet even to theſe ſacrilegious, and moſt abominable men did the emperor Sigiſmond grant a city; nay

he allowed their liberty to wretches, whom not to exterminate was a ſcandal to Chriſtendom."

With ſuch freedom does the licentious pen of this writer treat theſe reformers. His cenſures are entirely founded on their opinions. Of their practice he ſays nothing. That indeed was irreprehenſible. But among bigots, morals are always infinitely lower rated than opinions. Had the faith of the Taborites been unqueſtioned, their practice however licentious, had been unqueſtioned too.—But to ſee the real value of the invectives of this author, let us examine him a little cloſer; and inſtead of condemning him in the groſs for his opinions, let us treat him more fairly, and try his opinions by his practice.

A volume of his familiar letters ſurvived him: ſome of which appear to have *eſcaped* into public among the croud. In theſe letters, among other paſſages, the following will ſufficiently ſhew, what licence he indulged in point of morals; ſome of which paſſages fell from him even in his more advanced age.

Adviſing

Adviſing a friend about a wife, he thus ſpeaks, (epiſt. 45.) *Ego de me facio conjecturam: plures vidi, amavique feminas, quarum exinde potitus, tædium magnum ſuſcepi: nec ſi maritandus fierem, uxori me jungam, cujus conſuetudinem neſciam.*

In his 15th letter he tells a long ſtory of his debauching an Engliſh lady in the low countries; and triumphantly thus exults, *ſcis qualis tu gallus fueris; nec ego caſtratus ſum, nec ex frigidorum numero.*

Repining at the approach of age, *Mihi herculè*, (ſays he) *parum meriti eſt in caſtitate; nam, ut verum fatear, magis me venus fugitat, quam ego illam horreo.* Epiſt. 92.

Deſcribing the ſupple methods, by which he propoſed to obtain preferment, *Me regi*, (ſays he) *inſinuabo, regi parebo, regem ſequar, quod is volet, et ego volam, nulla in re adverſus ero, nec attingam aliquid, quod ſtatum meum non reſpiciat. Ego peregrinus ſum: conſultum mihi eſt Gnathonis officium ſuſcipere; aiunt, aio; negant nego.* Epiſt. 45.

Of the pleaſures of wine he ſpeaks in ſuch feeling language, as only a profeſſed voluptuary could uſe. *Vinum me alit, me juvat, me oblectat, me beat.* Epiſt. 92.

And

And that we may not be at a loſs for a key to all theſe illuſtrious paſſages, he takes care to give us one himſelf. *Non fieri poteſt* (ſays he) *quin animum ſuum prodat is, qui plurima ſcribit.—Nudus ſum, et aperte loquor. Veſtem omnem rejicio, nec laboro, cum ſcribo.* Epiſt. 402.

Such is the teſtimony, which Eneas Sylvius hath given us of himſelf. It may ſerve to invalidate what he hath ſaid of others; as it ſeems entirely to ſhew that his cenſures are founded upon a mere difference of opinion, without any regard to practice; which is one of the characteriſtics of bigotry.

They, who are not acquainted with the hiſtory of this writer, will be ſurpriſed to hear, that the man of whom we have this authentic character, was not only a pope; but is acknowledged by the generality of popiſh writers, as one of the moſt reſpecpectable of all the Roman pontiffs.

The END.

AN

EXPLANATION

OF THE

PLATES.

I.

THE works of Wicliff are repreſented as founded on ſcripture. The ſcourge is meant to characteriſe the acuteneſs and ſpirit of his conteſts with the regular clergy of his time. The taper repreſents him as deſtined to the work of enlightening mankind.

II.

A pillar, (the emblem of chriſtian fortitude) adorned with a crown of martyrdom, ſupports lord Cobham in his ſufferings. The other appendages point out his knighthood, peerage, and profeſſion of arms.

III.

III.

Huſs is repreſented as reſting firm upon the anchor of faith. The poſt, the manacles, chain, and crown of martyrdom ſhew his ſufferings, and their reward.

IV.

The dragon ſpending his fruitleſs rage againſt the medallion of Jerome repreſents the unavailing fury of Romiſh perſecution. The flaming fire-brand characterizes the genius of popiſh bigotry.

V.

The ſword of Ziſca is drawn in the defence of religion; which is characterized by a bible, untied to diſtinguiſh it as a proteſtant one. His medallion, reſting upon arms, repreſents him as a military reformer.

INDEX.

Page.

ANtichriſt: the pope ſo called by Wicliff. 23
Abſolution: Wicliff's opinion of it. — 67
Arundel, archbiſhop: his perſecution of lord Cobham. 116
Aretin, Leonard: his anſwer to Poggè of Florence. 267
Adamites, a ſociety of them: extirpated by Ziſca. 291
Auſig, ſiege of; 330—battle of, 331

B.

Bangor, biſhop of: his embaſſy. —— 20
Bible, tranſlation of, by Wicliff. —— 38
Barton, Dr. an enemy of Wicliff. —— 43
Baptiſm: Wicliff's opinion of it. —— 64
Bavaria, duke of: endeavours to make Huſs recant. 226
Baſil, council of. ——— —— 358
Broda, battle of. ——— —— 361

C.

Courtney, biſhop: his proſecution of Wicliff, 24—renewed. 47—inſtance of his reſolution. ——— 49
Church: Wicliff's opinion of it. —— 59
Chauntry-prieſts: his opinion about them. 71
Conſecrations: his opinion about them. 74
Cobham, Lord: his firſt oppoſition to the ſee of Rome. 106 —oppoſes Richard II. 110—ſent with an army into France. 114—the clergy intrigue againſt him. 116—his interview with Henry V. 118—cited before the primate. 119—implores the king's protection. 120—brought to a trial. 123—brought to a ſecond trial. 127—eſcapes out of the tower. 138—maligned as the author of an inſurrection. 140—ſeized in Wales. 150—put to death. 151—his character ſummed up. —— —— 152
Confeſſion: lord Cobham's. —— 121
Chicheley, Henry: inſtance of his policy. 147

INDEX.

Clergy, Bohemian: an account of them. 161
Coſſa, Balthaſar: an account of him. 170
Conſtance, council of: an account of it. 184
Caſis, Michael: his character. 190—exhibits a charge againſt Huſs. 210—exculpates himſelf. 216—manages the trial of Jerome of Prague. —— —— 245
Clum, baron of: attends Huſs to Conſtance. 187—his reſolution in his cauſe. 212—and noble friendſhip. 218
Cambray, cardinal of: an enemy of Huſs, 212.—his ſpeech to him in the council. —— 215
Conſtantinople, patriarch of: a zealous enemy of Jerome. 248
Calixtins, a religious ſect: oppoſe Ziſca. 319
Charles-ſtone: ſiege of. —— 324

D.

Didace, a ſubtil Franciſcan, employed againſt Huſs. 196
Degradation: ceremonies of one. 224
Dominichi, cardinal: ſent as legate into Bohemia. 276

E.

Edward III: his treatment of the pope. 10
Epitaph, Ziſca's —— —— 351

F.

Friars, begging: their diſturbance at Oxford. 5—Wicliff's behaviour to them. —— 36
Fox, Mr. his defence of Lord Cobham. 144
Franciſcan Friar: the interview of one with Huſs. 195
Florence, cardinal of: ſpeaks in favour of Jerome of Prague. —— —— 245

G

Gerſon, John: a ſpirited divine of the Roman church. 227—writes againſt Jerome of Prague. 248.—very inveterate againſt him. —— —— 240

H.

Hereſy: Wicliff's opinion about it. —— 80
Henry IV: his policy. —— 3
Huſs, John: his firſt acquaintance with the works of Wicliff. 159—attacks the clergy. 161—reforms the univerſity of Prague.

Prague. 165—attacked by the primate. 167—is excommunicated by the pope. 178—council of Conſtance. 182 Huſs cited thither. 186—his examination before the pope. 194—conference with a Franciſcan. 195—he is impriſoned. 198— falls ſick. 199—the Bohemian nobility interfere in his favour. 201—his firſt examination. 208—his ſecond examination. 210—his third examination. 213—he is condemned. 223—his execution. 225—his character ſummed up. —— —— 229

I.

Indulgences; Wicliff's opinion about them. 68
Images: Wicliff's opinion about them 73
Jerome of Prague: his education 223—inſtance of his want of temper. 234—his journey to Conſtance. 236—he leaves it, and is brought back. 239—his firſt hearing before the council. ibid.—treated with ſeverity. 242—recants. 244—brought to a ſecond trial. 249—condemned and executed. —— —— 254

K.

Knighton, his account of Wicliff's tranſlation of the bible. 39
Kamnitz, battle of. —— 314

L.

Langham, archbiſhop: ejects Wicliff.
Lectures, Wicliff's againſt the pope. 12—22
Lancaſter, Duke of: his connections with Wicliff. 17—25 —deſerts him. —— —— 46
Lewis, Sir Clifford: ſtops the proceedings of the clergy againſt Wicliff. —— —— 34
Lyra, Nicolas: the uſe Wicliff made of his bible. 38
Lollards: repreſented as enemies of government. 140
Latzenbock, baron of: attends Huſs to Conſtance. 187
Luther: his acccount of the council of Conſtance. 209—of the writings of Huſs. —— 230
Letter; Huſs's to his friends juſt before his execution. 221 —letter of the Bohemian lords to the council of Conſtance. —— —— —— 246
Lenfant: his opinion of the condemnation of Huſs. 227—his account of the concluſion of the council of Conſtance. 274
Lithuania, duke of: accepts the crown of Bohemia. 323—and reſigns it. —— —— 326

M.

Mulheim, John: promotes Huſs to a benefice. 158
Martin V. choſen pope. 185—writes to the Bohemian reformers. —— —— 275
Mainburgh: his apology for the emperor. 204
Morery: his account of Huſs's ſafe-conduct. 205—his ridiculous ſtory of the drum. —— 350
Madonwitz: his favour to Huſs. 207—and to Jerome of Prague. —— 241
Medal: an account of a remarkable one. 231
Mignard, his oppoſition to Procop. —— 360

N.

Naples, king of: his quarrel with the pope. 175
Nazareth, biſhop of: his teſtimony of Huſs. 187
Nuremburgh: Huſs's reception there. 188—convention of. 310

O.

Oaths: Wicliff's opinion of them. 79

P.

Piercy, earl: his regard for Wicliff. —— 25
Pope: his bulls againſt Wicliff. —— 28
Parliament: inſtance of its reſolution. 43
Purgatory: Wicliff's opinion about it. 70
Pilgrimages: Wicliff's opinion about them. 75
Paris; ſiege of: raiſed by lord Cobham. 115
Powis, lord: inſtrumental in ſeizing lord Cobham. 150
Piſa, council of. —— —— 163
Paletz, Stephen: his character. 189—inveterate againſt Huſs. 194—draws up articles againſt him. 194—manages his examination. —— —— 214
Perron, cardinal: his opinion of the death of Huſs. 229
Poggè of Florence: an account of him. 255—his letter. 257
Premonſtratenſian, John: put to death, 320
Procop, his character. 328—takes the lead after Ziſca's death. 354
Pernitz, ſiege of. —— 334
Prague, battle of, 337—Siege of. 342

Q.

Quinctilian, his works: where found. —— 256

Rome

INDEX.

R.

Rome—its tyranny. ——— 1
Radbert, Paſchaſe: the author of tranſubſtantiation. 41
Rapin; his remark on Richard II. 109—and lord Cobham's conſpiracy. —— —— 142
Ruſhner: his account of the diſciples of Wicliff. 112
Roſweide, a jeſuiſt: his apology for the emperor. 205
Reichental: his account of Jerome's flight from Prague. 336
Regent, Queen of Bohemia: her prudence. 280
Roqueſian, his negotiation. ——— 346

S.

Schiſm between the pope's: its origin. 35
Supremacy kings: aſſerted by Wicliff. 60
Sacraments: Wicliff's opinion of them. 63
Sanctuaries: oppoſed by Wicliff. 76
Speed his remark on Richard II. —— 109
Sigiſmond, emperor of Germany: his character. 182—convenes the council of Conſtance. 184—inclined to favour Huſs. 208—his ſpeech to him 214—his perplexity about Huſs. 219—his march into Bohemia. 283—his impolitic behaviour at Breſlaw. 285—beſieged in Prague. 294—takes poſſeſſion of Bohemia. 361—his clemency. 362
Sultzbach, duke of: ſeizes Jerome of Prague. 238
Selic Gaſper: his character and negotiations. 283
Soiſin: ſiege of. ——— 312
Sylvius Eneas; his account of the Taborites. 363—his bigotry. 369—paſſages from his letters. 271

T.

Tranſubſtantiation, attacked by Wicliff. 41
Tiler: his inſurrection. ——— 44
Titles: Wicliff's opinion about them. 77
Taylor, Biſhop: his thoughts on hereſy. 81
Teutonic order, knights of: their wars in Poland. 270
Tabor: its ſituation and works. ——— 289

U.

Univerſity of Prague; an account of it. 165—its teſtimony in favour of Huſs. —— —— 229
Varillas: his teſtimony of cardinal Perron. 228
Ulric: his death. —— ——— 288

Wicliff

INDEX.

W.

Wicliff—his education. 3—his diſpute with the friars. 5—appointed maſter of Canterbury-hall. 8—appeals to the pope. 9—non-ſuited at Rome. 11—made profeſſor of divinity. 12—attacks the church of Rome. 12—23—he is deprived. 17—countenanced by the duke of Lancaſter. 19—ſent ambaſſador to the pope. 20—proſecuted by the clergy. 24—and by the pope. 28—writes againſt the papal ſchiſm. 35—falls ſick. 36—tranſlates the bible. 37—attacks tranſubſtantiation. 41—condemned at Oxford. 44—maligned as the abettor of a rebellion. 45—proſecuted by the clergy. 46—driven from Oxford. 53—writes a ſecond time againſt the papal ſchiſm. 55—his death. 56—his opinions. 58—his writings. —— 83

Wodehall: the diſturbance he made at Oxford. 8

War: Wicliff's opinion about it. —— 80

Winceſlaus, king of Bohemia: his character. 169.—his policy. 180—offended at the council of Conſtance. 247—his death. —— —— 279

Wiſgrade, caſtle of: beſieged, —— 302

Z.

Zabarelle, a ſpirited divine of the Roman church. 227

Ziſca: of the early part of his life. 270—engages in the defence of the civil, and religious liberties of his country.—diſturbances in Prague.—an accommodation.—Ziſca's firſt victory.—Auſca taken.—Tabor fortified. 289—the Adamites extirpated 291.—the citadel of Prague beſieged. 294—and relieved 296—Sigiſmond retreats. 301—the defeat before Wiſgrade, and the ſurrender of that fortreſs. 304—Ziſca's difficulties with the Bohemian clergy. 306—he loſes his eye. 309—battle of Kemniſt. 314—Ziſca begins a reformation. 304—diſturbances at Prague. 318—the Lithuanians enter Bohemia 323—the emperor's preparations. 327—battle of Auſig. 331—Procop's actions in Moravia. 334—freſh diſturbances in Prague. 336—ſiege of that city, 342—Sigiſmond ſues for peace. 348—Ziſca's death. 349—his character ſummed up. 351

Zincho: his treachery. —— 286

ERRATA.

Read, *dignity* for *dignities*, page 9—*too* for *to*. 16—*into his confidence*, for *into confidence*. 19—*oppoſition* for *oppoſitions*. 30—a comma after, *his general*. 55—*no foundation* for *not foundation*. 65—*cautels* for *cantels*. 91—*gave it* for *give it*. 129—*Clum and Lutzenbock*, for *Clum at Latzenbock*. 187—*confeſſion* for *conceſſion*. 244.—*clamour* for *a clamour*. 272—*that the emperor* for *and that the emperor*. 285—*horrid* for *horried*. 292—*hungry* for *Hungary*. 298 — period after *ſlaughter farther*. 303—*an incampment* for *and incampment*. 306—period after *of the enemy*. 315—*diſtaſte* for *diſtate*. 336—*this ſignal* for *the ſignal*. 337—*loſe* for *looſe*. 341. — *rites* for *rights*. 342 — *the immediate*, for *immediate*. 344.—*his route* for *this route*. 349—*morbid* for *morbed*, 350—*Timoleon* for *Timolean*. 353.

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